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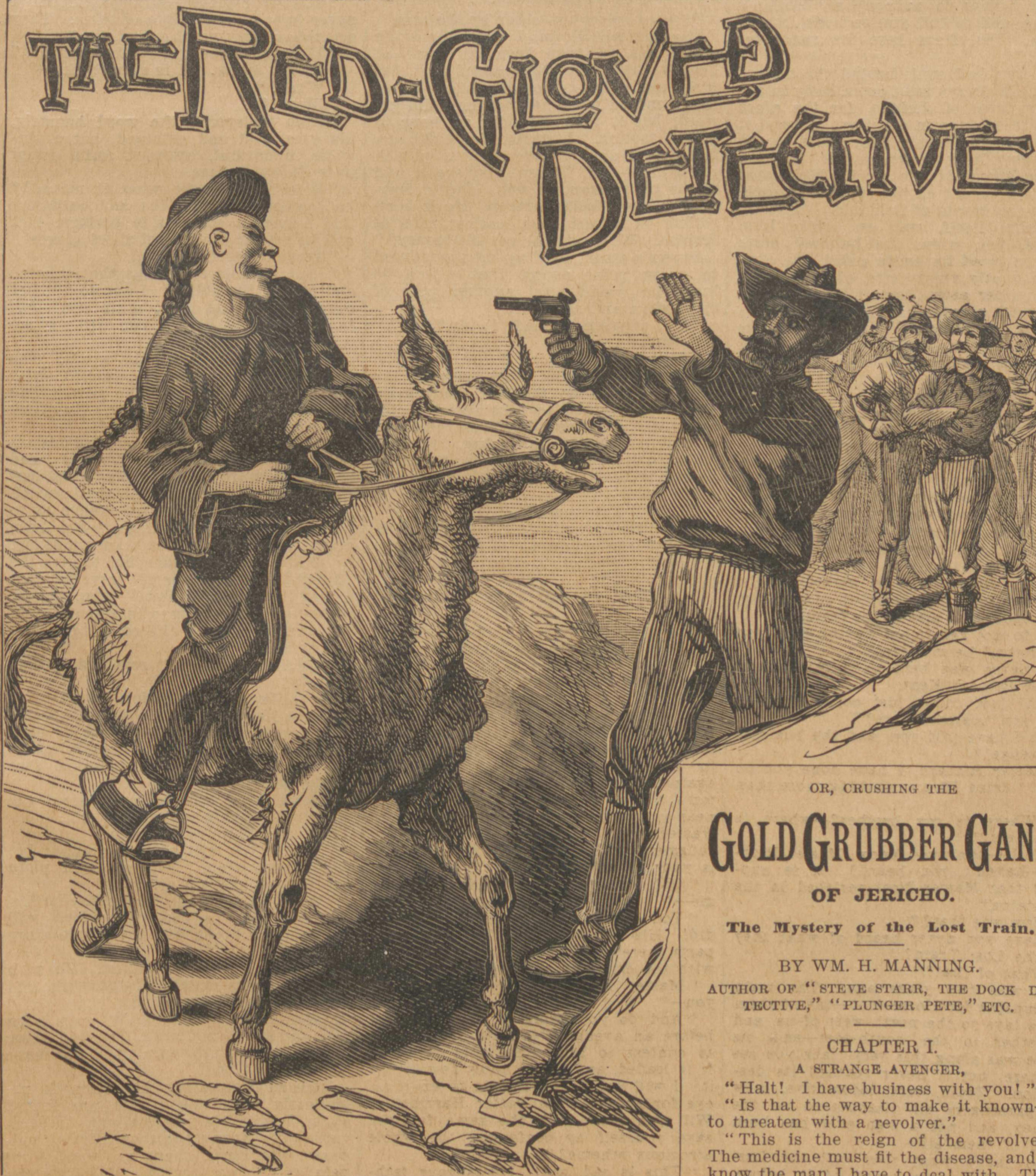
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OR, CRUSHING THE  
**GOLD GRUBBER GANG**  
OF JERICHO.

*The Mystery of the Lost Train.*

BY WM. H. MANNING.

AUTHOR OF "STEVE STARR, THE DOCK DETECTIVE," "PLUNGER PETE," ETC.

## CHAPTER I.

A STRANGE AVENGER,

"Halt! I have business with you!"

"Is that the way to make it known—to threaten with a revolver?"

"This is the reign of the revolver. The medicine must fit the disease, and I know the man I have to deal with. The revolver must rule here. When I meet a friend I come with an open hand, but

THE RIOTER-CHIEF HELD ONE HAND UP TO FORBID FURTHER ADVANCE, WHILE  
THE REVOLVER COVERED THE GRINNING CHINAMAN.

now I see a mortal enemy. More, I come with bitter wrongs to redress, with a mystery and a crime to speak of, with a terrible secret to lay bare, and for all that has happened in the past I hold you responsible for your share, Hiram Brown!"

"You know me!"

"I do."

"You are a stranger to me."

"Are you blind, man? Do your eyes fail you utterly? Can your mind do nothing to help you where sight fails?"

"There is a familiarity about your voice, it is true—"

"Dolt! Wander along no further like this. You should know me well. To whom were you once a servant? That man is dead, but he left offspring. Have you forgotten them?"

"What! can it be Richard Kent?"

"You have spoken my name; you have penetrated my identity. Have the suns of the tropics so changed me, or has your mind weakened with years?"

"I did not know you, Master Richard, and yet you are here—"

"Yes, here—here to end the trail I have long been upon; to solve a mystery and a crime; to avenge a brother's wrongs, and to call you to book, Hiram Brown. Yes, I am here for sweet revenge!"

The sun had sunk behind the distant peaks. It always went down early in the mining town of Jericho, for the place was nestled deep in a valley. Around it rose ranges of lesser size, while to the west were lofty peaks, and to the east the backbone of the Rocky Mountains stretched, as far as the eye could reach, across the bosom of Colorado.

Jericho, itself, was on fairly level ground, but, when the hundred acres that composed its limits ended, the cliffs rose abruptly, everywhere, often so steep as to render ascent impossible, but more often with a ledge easily scalable.

Along the eastern limits, too, ran the railroad, located just beyond the line of the cliffs, having the scantily-covered rock for a foundation as far as could be seen, with the exception of a short distance where a depression was spanned by a trestle. There the structure hung in the air like a monster spider, looking grim and impressive from the town.

The two men just introduced stood close to the eastern cliff. At that point the lower level was broken and rocky, and, as no houses or shanties had been planted there, they had the scene to themselves.

Hiram Brown was so moved by the interview that he trembled perceptibly, but wonder was also at the front.

"I do not remember having seen you in Jericho," he muttered.

"I never was here until this hour," replied Richard Kent.

"Ah! just come, just come. Have—have you business here?"

"So I have told you, and the business is revenge!"

"Master Richard, I have done you no harm!" cried Hiram, shaking more than ever.

"Where is my brother?—where is Noel Kent?"

"He is—don't you know, Master Richard?—haven't you heard? It is supposed that Master Noel perished in the mountains."

"How was that?"

"Have you never heard of what they call the Lost Train?"

"What of that?"

"It was two years ago. The train left Sunspot for Horse-foot—one of them places lays to the north-west of us, and the other to the south-east—and its course was along this very track you see up there, but it never reached its destination. Train, cars, locomotive, crew and passengers all disappeared on the journey, and not a sign ever has been found of them all."

"So that's what they call the Lost Train? Well, I've heard of it before. My brother Noel was a passenger. What became of him?"

"I don't know. It is all a terrible mystery."

"Terrible, indeed!" cried Richard, his voice ringing out with vehemence and feeling that made Hiram Brown shrink back. "It was a terrible deed, and terrible will be the atonement. Hiram, what was that crime? Who did it?—why was it done?—how was it done?"

"Nobody ever knew how the train was lost. It was very strange, for careful search was made all along the line of the road. Those who searched never could find even a truck to tell the fate of the train."

"And Noel Kent?"

"My young master was on that train, but he never has been seen since. He disappeared suddenly, like all the rest, and his fate is shrouded in darkness. Oh! Master Richard, if I had known where you was I should have sent word to you, for I liked you and your brother like my own sons, if I may humbly say so—"

"Where were you?"

"At Sunspot, sir."

"Were you in the plot?"

"The plot, sir?" faltered Hiram. "There wasn't any, sir."

Richard seized the other by the arm.

"Look you, Hiram, I want the truth about this. I have been far south of here in these last years, and I have but just heard of my brother's fate. I was four hundred miles away when I did get word, but it took me only an hour to get in motion. I started for Colorado, and here I am. I have come to punish the guilty—and, Hiram, you are a tool of the guilty man, or men. Foster Harrington was Noel's partner. He is here, rolling in wealth, the leading man of Jericho. Where did he get his money?"

Brown's weak, shifting eyes wandered to every point except that where he knew he would meet another pair of eyes, stern and accusing.

"I—I suppose he made it, sir."

"How?"

"Digging gold."

"Where? He and Noel operated the Yellow Jack mine together; they grew rich, and planned to take their wealth to Denver. It was all in dust, and was placed in a stout canvas bag. It went with Noel on the Lost Train; it disappeared with the train. Tell me, where did it go?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Immediately after, Foster Harrington branched out as a rich man. Where did he get his money, if he did not steal it from Noel?"

"Oh! dear, sir—oh! dear! He wouldn't do that—"

"Look you, Hiram, I have had enough of this!" sharply declared Richard. "You are older than when I saw you last; an old man with hair almost snow-white. I will be frank enough to say that your mind is weakened painfully with age. You are getting shaky mentally, Hiram. Well, all the more reason to ease your conscience. You went against Noel, and have been Harrington's tool ever since. Hiram, you are near your end; life will soon desert your wasted body, and then—then—ah! the judgment will come then, Hiram! How is your conscience?"

"Oh! sir, you surely don't suspect me—"

"You know what Foster Harrington did! His atrocious plot had you as a party thereto. Will you go to your death with the crime on your soul?"

"Master Richard, I do declare to you—"

"And do you think it wise to stand before an avenging brother and decline to confess to him? See this revolver! It is loaded, and I well know how to use it. I will use it. I am here to exact an eye for an eye from Foster Harrington. Will you meet with the same fate, or save yourself by confessing the whole atrocious scheme?"

"This is sad, sad! I was your father's servant, and, eight-and-twenty years ago, when you were a babe, I

held you in my arms. Would I turn against you or your good brother? Never, sir, never! I protest that I am loyal to the Kent family—loyal as the sun that warms this rocky land of Colorado."

Richard had released his hold upon his companion. He now resumed it, and with a roughness that made Hiram wince.

"I'll daily no longer with you, man! I am going to bring you to terms, and in my own way. You are not going back to the shanties of Jericho to meet Harrington and draw more poison into your mind. You will never see him again until you stand before him in court, a full accuser. Come with me!"

"Where?" gasped Hiram, weakly.

"Where I take you!"

"But I don't want to go. I want to return to my hut. Oh! you hurt me, Master Richard; your touch is harsh. Your strong hands—"

Hiram glanced down at the hands, and then stopped short. He remained looking steadfastly.

"Well, what now?" grimly asked Kent.

"You wear gloves—strange gloves. I never have seen the like of them. They are red—a very peculiar red, too."

"What does the hue remind you of?"

"I don't know. It is almost like—"

"What?"

"Blood!"

Hiram whispered the word hoarsely, his eyes wild and enlarged, but a singular, unnatural, exultant smile swept over Richard's face.

"Would you know what it means?" he demanded. "'Tis the announcement that I have a mission to perform that will be red as the hue of these gloves!"

"Terrible, terrible!"

"Is it terrible to avenge the innocent and punish the guilty? I am no butcher—not up to this time, mind you!—but justice shall be done! You will see my way of doing it."

Hiram scarcely heard the words. The previous announcement, coupled with the impressive looks of the gloves, had frightened the old man anew. He shook and was as helpless as a child.

The gloves which had arrested his attention were unlike any he ever had seen; and, more than anything else, that the color was not a real red, scarlet, magenta, or brown, but so unique as to raise the suspicion that they had been given this shade by one who aimed not to imitate regular colors, but to give the impression, correct or the reverse, that it was the stains of blood—then, indeed, there was cause to gaze in astonishment and wonder whence the coloring matter had come.

"Terrible, terrible!" repeated Hiram, blankly.

A smile of satisfaction swept over Richard Kent's face. He was no sensationalist, but a man of unusual strength of body and mind—a man practical in all ways, and full of resolution that would never flag.

"Come!" he ordered, and forced the old servant along toward the cliff.

"Where?" asked the miner.

"Where you will be in my power beyond redemption. Putting it in plain speech, you are my prisoner."

"What will you do, Master Richard?"

"Take you to captivity which will not end until you tell the whole story of Noel's death."

"But, sir, I know nothing. Go with me to my own shanty, if you wish, and I will entertain you—"

"No! Come with me! My grip is on you, and it will not relax. You will never look on the world again until you have confessed. Come!"

Richard was using his strength relentlessly now, and Hiram was forced along despite his protestations. Several yards they advanced; then Hiram, suddenly uttering a sharp exclamation of pain and terror, reeled and fell to the ground.

A rifle-shot rang out among the rocks.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE LOST WITNESS.

Richard Kent remained standing in a species of stupefaction that was unusual to him. His life had been one of adventure since his sixteenth year, and he had learned to think and act with both coolness and quick decision, but on the present occasion there were elements that touched his dearest wishes and weakened his qualities as a warrior.

Hiram Brown lay at his feet without motion, seeming to be dead. Ordinarily the survivor would have been quick to scan the higher ground whence the shot had come, and his gaze would have been keen. He who had fired once could fire again, and more danger might be menacing. Richard was as good a target as Hiram had been; another shot might drop him.

All this he knew, but he disregarded it.

As soon as his bewilderment vanished a little he flung himself down by Hiram's side.

"Man, man!" he cried, "are you hurt, are you killed? Speak out!"

A deep groan was the only response.

"Some life is left in you; the shot was not instantly fatal. Possibly it is not even dangerous, but it must be seen to. Where are you hit? Where is the wound?"

"I die! I die!" muttered Hiram, feebly.

"No no! Say not so. I am no mean surgeon, for I have seen gunshot wounds from Colorado to the pampas of South America. Where is the shot, I say!"

"Too late! They suspected me."

"What! Did they know I was here?"

"It wasn't that."

"Then what were you suspected of, man?"

"I told them there had been too much blood and they put two and two together. They are desperate fellows and they would not let my old life stand in their way. They have found a way to take it, too."

"They? Whom do you mean? Speak, Hiram Brown, and let your last strength go in a good cause. How was my brother killed, and who did it? Was Foster Harrington as guilty as I believe him? Tell me. What became of the Lost Train and what became of Noel Kent?"

The old man had seemed to be sinking, but he now revived abruptly, grasped Richard's arm and, with its help and his own unnatural strength, partially raised himself.

His voice rung out shrilly, but with remarkable power.

"Away! Away!" he exclaimed, wildly. "It is not yet too late to stop them. The night is still young and if honest men combine this great crime may be prevented!"

"What crime?" demanded Richard.

"The Gold Grubbers! The Gold Grubbers! They will gather and there will be blood if they are not checked. Away! Seek the honest men! Go to Sheriff West! Go to Dan Wallace! Stop them! Stop this great crime before it is—it is too late!"

Hiram's utterance had become disjointed and husky, and at the last word his head drooped and he lay passive in his companion's arm.

"Dead!" exclaimed Richard.

It was a natural conclusion, but hope died hard. Reluctant to believe that all his own plans had miscarried, the adventurer tore open the shirt of the wounded man. His skillful hand sought the miner's heart.

"It beats! The pulse is not wholly gone! I could almost swear he is good for several hours yet! Why, the hurt may not be mortal! Where is it? Ah!"

Here's the blood. Right in his side. A doubtful case, but if I had the surgical appliances—"

Richard leaped to his feet. At that moment it lacked but little of being wholly dark and the lights of Jericho shone through the entire stretch of Goat-Track Valley.

"I may do it yet!" he added, excitedly. "I'll go and bring help!"

To think was to act, and he dashed off rapidly, leaving Hiram where he had fallen. The adventurer had never been in Jericho, but it was not hard to pick out the largest building there, nor more difficult to detect that it was a hotel.

He reached the place and ran inside. He had happened on the public room, or bar-room, and a full score of men were present, all idle and looking none too amiable.

The self-appointed messenger knew the class with which he had to deal. Unless some strategy was used they might refuse to aid him, for they did not look cheerful. He used the strategy. He walked to the bar with a heavy tread.

"Bar-keep!" he cried, "give every man here a drink and let him fill the glass flush, too. I pay for all, if the men can drink quick. How is it, gents?—can you?"

If he had doubted it he was undeceived. In a body the loungers surged to the bar, and Pete Dunn's liquid goods were promptly despatched. During this ceremony the stranger's keen gaze was on his men, and, when he noted the friendly expressions on their faces, he felt that he could proceed without more delay.

He held up his hands so prominently that all could see, clapped the high-colored coverings together sharply, and then spread out his hands, wide open, again.

"Gents," he announced. "I am Redglove Richard!"

He paused for a moment, anxious to let them detect the appropriateness of the name, and then added:

"I am Redglove Richard, and I'm a stranger here. I want help. Who is ready to give it?"

There was a murmur from the men, and one and all placed themselves at his disposal. He asked for no more.

"There is a wounded man just beyond the line of your houses," he proceeded. "I want him brought here, and I want it done mighty quick, and I want a good doctor, if there is one."

His impetuous manner had effect, and, as it so happened that all present were accustomed to catching at chances, he was attended to with remarkable celerity. The crowd rushed out of the hotel, paused for a moment to add to their number a doctor that lived hard by, and then the whole party hastened where Redglove Richard guided.

He reached the spot where Hiram Brown had fallen.

"Where's the galoot?" demanded a follower.

Richard had paused. He was looking around in confusion.

"Why, I don't see him!" he exclaimed.

"Whar did you leave him?"

"Close by yonder rock; not two feet from where you stand."

"He ain't hyer now; that's dead sartain. Nary mortal kin I see a-bleedin' his last bleed."

"He must have crawled off a little. Scatter and search for him. Away, men, and ten dollars to him who finds him first."

The recruits were zealous, and they rushed off again. It was not hard work, nor long work, to cover as much territory as was necessary to establish one fact, and that was that the man was not between the town and the cliffs.

He had gone, living or dead, but it had

been in a way that seemed strange to Richard. He said as much.

"Either yer dyin' man was a lively corpse, or he had help," asserted a miner. "He ain't around."

"I cannot believe he had time to get to the houses."

"Mebbe he's gone up ther cliffs."

"He was too badly wounded."

"Then somebody has helped him off. Dead men ain't no great at foot-races, an' you kin bet yer jumpers he was helped off."

Redglove Richard contracted his brows and stood inactive. There was much to be thought of. Unless Hiram had deceived him vastly he had been helped off, but, if there had been anybody to do it, why had not the person come to the adventurer's aid when aid was needed?

"Maybe," mused the young man, "it was the same scoundrel who did the shooting. If so, another mystery is added, and it is too deep for me just now. Anyhow, I have lost Hiram, and it is a great loss. The secret I hoped to wring from him may be gone forever!"

Bitter was his disappointment, but one of his aids had a question to ask.

"Who was the wounded man?"

"He said he lived here, and he gave the name of Hiram Brown."

"Oh! So it was Hiram!"

"You know him, I see?"

"He lives hyer, jest ez he said ter you."

"What sort of a man is he?"

"He's decent, Hiram is; but he's old and mighty slow. Et don't matter so much ef he has pegged out."

It was a speech that was not challenged, but Kent was not disposed to agree with it. Far from it! To him the loss of Hiram, living or dead, was a serious matter.

"How happened you ter know about his bein' wounded, Redglove?" pursued the leading miner.

"I was just entering town when I heard the shot. I came to see the cause and found matters as I have said. Men, it may not be too late to recover him, dead or alive. Scatter and search the slope. The reward still holds good. Away, my good fellows!"

Instantly there was a brisk scrambling up the cliffs. Although there were spots where nobody could well climb up, the rocks were generally accessible; and the plan was a success in all ways but one—no sign of the missing man was found.

The idea was getting hold on Richard's mind that he had been outwitted by Hiram, and that the latter had not been so badly wounded as he had claimed. Believing, therefore, that his best way was to await the revelations of time, the stranger in Jericho abandoned the search and led his followers back to the hotel. Next he took pains to strengthen their good will by calling them again to the bar, and then he dismissed them.

He took quarters at the hotel, recording his name simply as "Redglove Richard," but he declined the landlord's offer to escort him to his room then. Instead he left the hotel and walked toward the western half of Goat-Track Valley.

He kept on through the dimly-lighted street, his eyes always busy, and no house escaping his attention.

"I was told that Foster Harrington's home was one with vines over the door, and a dormer window, and the only one that had both those points. I shall call there right away. I'll knock at the door and ask for him. He keeps servants. If the servant says Harrington is in, I'll leave this dummy letter I have provided for the occasion—it is only an excuse to get out of my dilemma, if there is a dilemma—but if Foster is not in, I'll call for Madam Harrington. I have business with her. Ah! haven't I!"

A deep breath escaped the adventurer's lips—it was almost a hiss, and it told of intense feeling. He did not pause, and soon his eyes lighted up.

"There's the house! I'm sure of it, and now to take up my trail. If I had my wishes to consult I would place dynamite under the house and end it all before—but this is insanity. I will go on; I'll see who is there. My vendetta begins!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### MURDER IS CHARGED.

Redglove Richard walked to the house and rung the bell. Perhaps he could not have found another private bell in Jericho, but this was the aristocratic residence of the mining town. A servant came in response to the call.

"Is Mr. Foster Harrington in?" asked Kent.

"No, sir!" was the answer.

"His wife?"

"Yes."

"I want to see her."

Richard pressed forward and entered the house. There was something unceremonious about this, but Jericho was not a place where fine feeling and ceremony had an abiding place. The girl thought nothing of the intrusion.

"Step into the parlor," she directed. "What name?"

"Smith!"

"I will tell my mistress."

The girl went her way and Richard looked around with curiosity.

"A mighty well furnished room," he mused. "Foster has plenty of money, but I wonder how he got it? Is this mansion laid out with the toil and sufferings of Noel Kent in the mines?"

There was not much delay. A lady came to the caller's presence. She was less than thirty years of age, but Nature had been kind to her. Her face and form were alike good, and, as she was tall and well-poised, she had a bearing of the kind usually termed queenly. Her attire was of sober hues, and her dress was black, but it was silk. A fine-appearing woman was this lady of Jericho.

She and Redglove Richard stood face to face.

"You wished to see me, sir?" she questioned, her voice low and refined, and almost sad, one would say.

"Yes, I did," agreed the caller.

"On business, I presume?"

"Decidedly so; yes, on business."

"Mr. Harrington is absent, but if I can officiate in his place I will do so, sir."

"You are his wife?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you like your position?"

Thus far the lady had simply been polite and kind, but her eyes opened wider now.

"Sir?" she returned, like one who is not sure she understood.

"Do you like your position?"

"I fail to comprehend, Mr.—I think you sent the name of Smith."

"Never mind the name of Smith. Where is Noel Kent?"

Redglove Richard shot the question at her like a bullet. He was not disposed to let much valuable time go to waste, so he had started at once on the trail.

The interrogation was not a pleasant one to Mrs. Harrington—that was plain. She started; she changed color; she seemed distressed, and regarded the caller with anything but the composure previously shown.

"I—I think—perhaps you have not heard of Mr. Kent's death," she faltered, her eyes growing darker with some inward feeling.

"On the contrary, I have heard of it, and I have heard of your second mar-

riage. I am well informed. How is it with you? Woman, don't you know me?"

Before that she had known of no reason why she should recognize him. Now, she concentrated her gaze upon him, seeking light in his appearance. She saw a man of about her own age, dark of hair, mustache and complexion, and tanned more than the average, even in Colorado; a man plain of dress and features, with clothes that surely never cost much, but which fitted his fine form well; and a face so plain as to be almost homely.

A very plain man was Redglove Richard, yet his was a face of tremendous power. He was impressive.

"No," she responded, after a vain look, "I don't know you. Have we met previous to this evening?"

"We have, Olivia!"

"Pardon me, sir, but my Christian name is one I reserve for the use of my personal friends."

"Lord! Lord!" muttered the visitor, "it was not always thus. No! There was a time, Mrs. Olivia Harrington, when you let me call you by your girl's name. Yes, and when you let me call you other things—when you allowed me to encircle your waist with a welcome arm, and press your lips with other lips that feel like withering when they think of it now."

She drew back with lofty indignation.

"Sir?" she exclaimed, severely; "this is infamous!"

"Well, it is true."

"It is not true—it is a disgraceful lie!"

"Mrs. Olivia Harrington, we waste words. Don't you know me?"

"No!"

"I am Richard Kent!"

The adventurer folded his arms and stood like a statue. He would have been statue-like in all ways had not his keen eyes glittered with fire—with hostility and aggressive resentment.

Olivia was no statue. When she heard his name she fell back in consternation. Her cheeks blanched and her movements betrayed a wavering that might have been the fore-runner of a fall to the floor. She was frightened. She receded, it is true, but she continued to confront Richard Kent, presenting a ghastly face to his view.

"You—you?" she gasped.

"I!" coldly returned the man.

"I did not know; I did not think; I did not recognize you," she quavered.

"I seem to have changed my skin, or something of that sort. Eye me closer, Olivia Harrington! Do you see that I am the man I claim to be?"

"I see it now."

"Good! Now there is no need of beating around the bush. Let us come to the point. I am Richard Kent. Where is my brother—where is the man you married?"

"I regret to say that poor Noel is dead," sighed Olivia.

"Where is his grave?"

"Nobody knows. I have not had the melancholy satisfaction of weeping by his grave."

"For a weeping widow you married again very quickly."

"I was a woman, alone in the world."

"Who made you so?" he cried.

"I never knew."

"Now, look here! There isn't a bit of use of dissemblance over this business. The whole thing is plain as the peaks of the Rockies. Noel was killed for his money, and you married the man who killed him!"

Mrs. Harrington threw up her hands dramatically.

"Horrible! Horrible!" she gasped.

"Yes; it was horrible!"

"I mean that your charge was horrible—yes, and it is infamous. You don't

—you can't—mean that Mr. Harrington did it?"

"He led the plot. Who else was in it I can't say just yet—possibly you had part in the killing?"

"Sir?"

"If you are innocent make it manifest! I have come hundreds of miles to solve the mystery of my brother's tragic end. What can you tell me about it?"

"I will gladly tell all I can, Richard. Please sit down and let us talk in peace. There should be no hard feelings between us, because, if there were mistakes in early life, they have been paid for dearly, dearly, and I have since tried to do my duty."

Richard took the seat. He was not sure whether he understood his companion. She had been filled with consternation and fear when she recognized him. She was still afraid; she was still agitated; but she was beginning to recover, and native resources were beginning to make themselves felt.

What was her actual position? He knew she wanted to be on amicable terms with him, but further than this he could not guess. She might feel the good will she expressed, or be a hypocrite in the worst sense of the word. Richard could not tell just how she stood, but he hated her bitterly, and suspected her of crime, and he was not disposed to be caught unawares.

Olivia sighed.

"It was a sad business!" she murmured.

"Yes, for Noel!"

"I nearly lost my reason over it."

"How do you account for it?"

"I wish I had even a theory, but I have not. Do you know how our poor Noel took the train for Horse-foot, and how he and the train and all connected with it disappeared from the face of the earth?"

"I know the history of the Lost Train."

"Noel went away in high spirits then. His was en route to Horse-foot, but the journey was not long, and he expected to be back with me in a short time."

"Did you expect he would?" abruptly demanded Richard.

"Why, of course; most certainly! Then away he went on the train, and that was the last that mortal eyes saw of him. The railroad between Sunspot and Horse-foot was nearly new then, and the whole track was as firm as iron, laid as it was on the mountains themselves. You can see a bit of the track from this very window, for the road runs past this town. It seemed to be as safe a trip as anybody could take."

"Yet the train was lost?"

"Yes."

"How much was it hunted for?"

"Constantly, for six months. It was believed that it had in some unknown manner fallen from the rails to one of the canyons that the tracks span, so all were examined thoroughly. Not a sign was seen, and the Lost Train remains a dark mystery."

"Men are pretty solid flesh, and iron is right substantial metal. Flesh and metal vanished and left no sign, eh?"

"Yes."

"Humph! How much were the hunters for the Lost Train paid not to find it?"

"Your suspicion is unjust. Among those who searched were men from Denver and St. Louis, sent by the main railroad because of their assured fidelity and honesty. They found nothing. All Colorado, too, hunted. Do you believe there was not an honest man in Colorado?"

"That's a staggerer, madam, and I am not prepared to gainsay it, I admit. Let that pass; I did not come here to ask how that train disappeared so mysteri-

busily. Let that drop. I want to speak of Noel. You say he went on the train. What else went?"

"Why, there were freight cars, and a few passengers—for the same system was pursued then as now—freight and passenger cars were run all on one train."

"What do you suppose I care for this? I mean, what did Noel take with him?"

Olivia surveyed her companion for a moment, and he was sure she was seeking to read how much he knew. Then she sighed again.

"I suppose you refer to our money—to the great amount of dust he had gathered at the Yellow Jack Mine, some miles beyond Sunspot. He took it along with him, intending to turn it into cash and deposit the proceeds."

"The bag of gold was never heard from?"

"Never!"

"Not by anybody?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Why do you lie about this?" fiercely demanded Redglove. "Don't you know I can see through the whole like it was glass? Woman, you may deceive others, but you can't deceive me. I understand all."

"Do you charge me—do you dare charge me with—"

"I charge you and Foster Harrington with plotting against Noel, even when you were Noel's wife; and with having stolen the bag of gold and murdered my brother!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THEIR PAST LIFE.

Olivia suddenly rose, her manner full of indignation.

"I will not listen to such unjust charges!" she cried. "I am a woman, and you should have some consideration for me. If you believe what you say, why didn't you go to my husband, in person, and not come to bully a woman?"

"There is cunning skill in that," returned Richard, composedly; "it was well put. Possibly I can answer just as well. I came to you, first, because I wanted to see if your conscience was all seared and blackened; because I wanted to give you a chance to save your soul by frank confession before I struck the blow that will sweep Foster Harrington to his doom!"

"My conscience is easy!" declared Mrs. Harrington, but her voice trembled as she spoke.

"Are you sure?"

"Can you doubt it?"

"I could doubt anything connected with you!" exclaimed the other, passionately. "Why, woman, you are so steeped in iniquity that I could almost doubt that you were born human like the rest of mankind. You seem, rather, to be a demon!"

"This is most unjust—"

"Let us look at the record. I knew you when you were a younger woman than you are now. I had taken to the Wild West when I was sixteen years old, but I finally came home on a visit and met you. In a few weeks I had decided to abandon adventuresome life. Do you remember why it was? I'll tell you. You and I had confesed mutual love for each other, and you had pledged yourself to be my wife."

"That was a long while ago—"

"What was the result? You said you loved me madly, and you acted as if you did. All went swimmingly, and I planned for a peaceful career in the East, instead of the turbulent life of the mines and plains. What was the result?"

"Richard, I am human—"

"Very human in weakness, at least. You cast me off and married by brother Noel, instead!"

"He urged me—"

"Woman, don't lie about this. Noel was not blameless, for he knew how you and I stood; I should say he was very much to blame had not time shown me what you were. Noel did wrong, but there was much of manliness and brotherly honor in his way, after all. He tried to run away and leave me to you, and I compelled him to stop at the point of a revolver. He had won you; me must take you!"

"You were young—"

"Understand me. I did not force Noel to marry you; far from it. All I did was to stay his brotherly plan of running off to leave you and me together to pluck the cup of bliss. I made him stay in town, and, when we three had talked it over, and you had confessed that you loved him, and him alone, and I had added my blessing, not even Noel objected to the wedding. You and he were married."

"We had not your good will. All through you were like a pirate in manner."

"What could you expect? The woman who had promised to be my wife had proven false, and it was my own brother who had robbed me of her love. Could you expect me to smile and act the hypocrite? I am not built that way. Maybe I was curt and savage of manner, but I yielded you up to him like a brother. Immediately I returned to the West, and since then I've been mostly in Central and South America. I should be there now had I not heard of Noel's fate. I have come to see about it."

"Poor Noel!"

"Pah! Your alleged grief is a sham!" hotly cried Redglove. "You married another man inside of a year. I now charge you and Foster Harrington with having deliberately murdered Noel for his money. He and Harrington were partners at the Yellow Jack Mine. They grew rich, and Noel undertook to carry their dust—a cool hundred thousand dollars of it, rumor says—he set out, I say, to carry it to a safer place. He started on the Lost Train. He disappeared from view, but it was not many months before Foster Harrington, his partner, had plenty of money and—a wife! He had scooped in Noel's wife—what of Noel's money?"

"You are cruelly unjust."

"Olivia, will you take a last chance?"

"In what way?"

"Confess and save your own life."

"My life?"

The adventurer threw up his hands.

"Look!" he directed. "See what I wear here! Observe these blood-red gloves! Why do you think I—a plain man—am rigged out thus? 'Tis a sign that I am wedded to revenge; that I am going to avenge the death of Noel Kent, though it be the work of years. All who had share in the vile deed will suffer to the full limit. Will you be one, or will you save yourself by confession?"

"There is nothing to confess."

"Enough! I go; but remember the red gloves!"

He held them further forward, and she shivered as she drew back.

"Horrible, horrible!" she murmured.

"I will be frank enough with you to say there is another meaning to these sanguinary things. Yes, there surely is another meaning, but what it is I cannot tell now. Though I am willing to let people know I am a trail of blood, I am not a sensationalist. There is another meaning."

Olivia turned her gaze away as if sick with the sight.

"What do you intend to do?" she asked.

"Crush Foster Harrington!"

"He is my husband, and the leading man of this town."

"I will make him its humblest citizen."

"You would not dare say that to him, and he will have all the people at his back."

"Yes, he is not likely to face them like a man."

With this scornful retort Richard walked to the door. There he paused and confronted Olivia again. A gravity of manner had come to him abruptly, and his expression was not unkind, as he added:

"After all, you are a woman. Personally, I can feel only scorn for you; yet I would not crush you wholly. Will you not take a last chance and confess?"

"You say you intend to do harm to Foster. How?"

"You should practice cunning. You are too abrupt. Well, Mrs. Harrington, I shall not explain my plans to you. You will see them in due time; then the last act will be over. You have played many parts in your time. The accepted wife of one man, the bride of another, and the partner in murder of a third—that's a record that some women cannot boast of, Olivia."

"You are unjust as ever."

"I am done with talk. Presently, Mrs. Harrington, I shall open this door. Then I shall look back to you. I shall not say another syllable. If you want me to return and hear your confession, call me back. If you do not, I go in silence to begin my work of revenge. See!—I open the door."

He did open it, and then he paused on the threshold.

He looked at Olivia with questioning eyes.

Her color changed and she was plainly excited, but she was uncertain how to act; she said nothing.

A full half-minute passed; then Redglove moved again.

He turned his head; he stepped outside the room; he closed the door. The interview was past!

Without once looking back he passed out of the house.

The hour was not yet so late that any signs of sleep were to be seen in the houses along the streets, and the hotel, he could see, far ahead, was lighted up rather brilliantly. Jericho was still throbbing with life.

The shadower was disappointed but not surprised by the result of his call. He regarded Olivia as a woman of criminal nature, and he had given her the chance to confess only because it seemed to be a natural beginning.

"I shall not need to announce it formally to Harrington, I reckon," he mused. "She will tell all to her dear husband, and Foster will thus learn just what I intend to do. She boasted that he would have all of Jericho at his command. Big odds, I admit, but I don't fear them all. Let the fight come!"

#### CHAPTER V.

##### THE AMBUSHED TRAIN.

Redglove Richard felt in no haste to return to the hotel, and he did not forget Hiram Brown. There was still a chance that the man might be found. Possibly he had recovered enough to crawl off, himself, and was then in some crevice in the rocks that had not been seen by the previous searchers.

The shadower went back to where Hiram had fallen, and then followed another vain search. After he was done Richard was about to retreat to the town, when he caught sight of a man descending the ledges. He waited for this person, who soon arrived close to his own position.

A hearty hail followed from this man.

"Hallo, stranger!"

Richard returned the friendly greeting.

"I've jest blowed in hyer," proceeded the unknown, "but I reckon you are a natyve. I was hyer a year ago, an' I met an old sinner o' ther name o' Tom Allen. Do yer know ef the feller is still campin' hyer?"

"I, too, am a new-comer here, and I can't say. This region is as new to me as to you."

"I didn't say et was new ter me; et ain't. I passed some time hyer last year, an' et wasn't the first time. I come pretty nigh bein' ther first white man in these hills, by durn! Mebbe you've heard o' me? I'm Ben Bitters."

"I arrived in Jericho only a few hours ago, and I never was in this region before. That probably explains why I never heard of you."

"Oh! I didn't intend ter say I was a great man—not any. Still, I'm tolerably known, fer I've been a guide ter the gold-seekers o' Colorado. I had hunted all through these parts, an' even crossed most o' the desolate regions o' these same hills, so I knew them well an' acted as guide, ez I have said. Yes, I know everything in Colorado—all but the spook train."

"You interest me, Mr. Bitters! Though a stranger here, I have heard of this phantom train. What is it?"

"A ghost!"

"Is it really regarded as supernatural?"

"Sure!"

"Do you believe it?"

"Wal, mostly. I've had durned bad luck in gettin' close view on't, so I can't swear it's a ghost, but I reckon she be."

"If so, of what is the ghost?"

"Of the Lost Train, as they call et."

"I've heard of that, too. And does rumor really say that the ghost of that strangely lost railroad train is still flitting through these massive hills?"

"She do, stranger."

"Of course, that is impossible."

"I dunno, stranger; I dunno. Eyes is eyes, an' seein' is believin', yer know. Sartain et is that there is a spook train. Et makes trips through the mountains, but et don't go at reg'lar intervals. Probably thar ain't no time-table fer the ghost train ter use."

"Have you seen it?"

"Only once."

"Tell me about it?"

"Wal, et was simple. I was out in ther mountains all alone—I am always alone, unless I'm guidin' a party somewhere—an' I halted fer ther night. My camp was a long rifle-shot from the railroad track, as I shall tell yer presently.

"Et was gettin' pretty sharp on ter midnight when I began ter think o' goin' ter bed. I had smoked all ther evenin', an' I was struck with ther notion that my blanket seemed mighty invitin'.

"Jest as I was about ter move I heerd somethin' that was familiar ter me. Et was the rumble o' a train.

"Hello!" says I, 'hyer's an extra! Wonder why they sent that out?'—fer you see extras ain't often run on this road, stranger.

"I sot still an' waited. Nigher an' nigher come ther train, an' I fixed my gaze fer et. I could see a good bit o' the track from whar I lay, an' the night wasn't no great shakes fer darkness.

"Direckly she hove inter sight—a train runnin' free an' easy. Thar was the engine, an' ther cars, an' the whole outfit jest as railroad men run them."

"Then it was a regular train?" interrupted Redglove Richard.

"Not much, she wasn't!" exclaimed Ben Bitters. "Et was the spook train! I knowed that as soon as I seen her, an' so would any galoot with eyes. She made some noise, but not a bit like a regular train. No! She got along over ther rails like a true ghost, an' then—the color! The ghost train is pure white,

an' that was the color o' that train I seen that night."

"Isn't it possible that your sight deceived you?"

"Wal, now, old Ben Bitters ain't accounted blind," gruffly answered the guide.

"But the uncertain light—the possibility that you were sleepier than you thought—"

"Young feller, ef you ever see that spook train you won't go around among yer neighbors askin' of them ef they see any signs that you've got any cutaneous disease o' yer optics. Not any! When a chap sees that phantom train he knows it ever after—ef he don't go crazy then an' thar. Yes!"

"What became of the train?"

"Kept scootin' along ther rails—or inter ther air, I dunno which, until et was tetotally gone. But et didn't go without my compliments."

"How was that?"

"See this gun I kerry? But of course yer don't, fer et is dark an' eyes ain't made that way. This gun is Long Peter. I had him then, an' ez I was skeptikel, I allowed I wasn't goin' ter be fooled. I ups with Long Peter, drawed a bead onter ther engyne an' blazed away. I put a bullet through the cab, by durn!"

"And the result?"

"Did you ever shoot a ghost?"

"Never!"

"I didn't then—not ter drop et. The train kept on its way as calm as ef nothin' had happened. Hurt, eh? Not much! You can't hurt a ghost!"

"Then this phantom train is a reality?"

"Yes, dead sartin, sure!"

"And it is supposed to be the ghost of the so-called Lost Train?"

"Jes' so, by durn!"

"How often is it seen?"

"Can't say, but I hear on't now an' then."

"Bitters, I will pay you, later, to take me to where we can see this spook train."

"As fur as I know you won't need no guide, fur all that anybody knows o' the blamed spook is that she glides along them rails that you kin see up yender; the track from Sunspot ter Horse-foot. Still, I'm not refusin' yer offer. Ef you want ter tramp ther hills with old Ben Bitters, you kin do et on condition that he likes yer way when he sees yer by day. What's yer name?"

"Redglove Richard."

"Wal, Redglove, see me ter-morrow an' we will talk this over a few more. My road goes this way. Will ye walk with me?"

"Gladly."

The brother's avenger had taken a fancy to Ben, so he improved the chance to strengthen his hold upon his new acquaintance. All he could see of Ben was that he was a tall, thin, muscular man, who seemed to be a veteran, and as there was a bluff honesty about him, Richard wanted him for a friend and pard.

When the houses were reached they halted again. Ben did not seem anxious for company, and the younger man was willing to wait for the morrow so he could see more clearly what the guide was.

They were still in conversation when Ben suddenly lifted his head and looked toward the eastern cliffs.

"What's that?" he exclaimed.

"Sounds like a train."

"So it is. Huh! Thar she comes, roundin' the curve over by Nigger's Nose."

"Can that be the phantom train?" cried Richard.

"No, no, boy! That's a reg'lar wood-an'-iron train, though not on ther time-table. She's an extra. Makes a fine

showin', don't she? See ther headlight glow like a giant's eye, an' list ter ther rattle o' ther wheels! Now, ef we was up thar—What!"

"A rifle is sounded!"

"Thunder! Yes, an' ther engineer pitches forruds inter his cab. Say, that's murder—"

"Ben, the locomotive leaps from the rails!"

"She does, true as yer live!"

"The cars follow!"

"A wreck, a wreck!"

"Can it be speed did that?"

"I tell ye et's a wreck, an' I say that I mean et was done on purpose! That's a risky spot up thar, an' every precaution was taken ter make the track strong—"

"Ha! One of the cars topples down into the valley!"

"More shots, boy! This way!—ter the rescue! They've been wrecked an' ambushed, an' thar is work for honest men ter do thar!"

Long before all this talk had taken place they were bounding across the valley toward the point where the dangerous music of revolvers still sounded. Richard was young and active, but he was forced to do his best to keep up with Ben, whose lengthy legs seemed like rubber.

It was not a long dash, but there was exhilarating accompaniment to their steps. Shots still rung out, and Ben grew excited.

"Fun ahead, boy, fun ahead! Out with yer shootin'-irons, an' mebbe we kin beat ther whole gang o' wreckers! We'll try."

"Count me in for anything I can do for the right!" quickly replied the man from the tropics.

"Say, I do believe the wreckers have been routed! Somebody retreats up ther rocks—who, ef not them?"

"Can the crew have done all this?"

"Ef so they are good ones."

"The shooting continues, but it is a flight and pursuit now. The beaten party scrambles hard and desperately, pausing now and then to send a shot after their foes."

"Ay, lad, an' they have hot lead behind them."

"The victors shoot, too, and they keep their rifles going well."

"The train is a miserable wreck, splintered an' turned over, an' it has been mean business. Thar must be some dead folks up thar on the cliffs. Climb, lad, climb hard, an' let us be in at ther death! We want ter do some shootin', too. Up with yer, but keep yer eyes open fer danger. Them others kin shoot as wal as we. Up, lad, up!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### BY THE WRECK.

The view from the valley had been one thoroughly picturesque. The retreat had been so irregular that men were scattered all along the slope, one above the other, and at all points the sheets of flame that followed the discharges made brief but thrilling illuminations.

This was a spectacle presented to Redglove Richard's view as he ran, but by the time he and his companion reached the cliff there was a change.

"The firing flags!" exclaimed Richard.

"I reckon it is about over."

"I see no sign that prisoners have been made."

"Seems more ter me like a defeat fer the pursuers."

"They have driven off the foe."

"Yes, but that won't be accounted much o' a victory. They didn't get them, I fear."

"The car that has toppled down into the valley shows no sign of life, but, as we are not needed above, we may well make sure here."

"No use, I reckon. It's a freight-car, an' thar ain't a groan comin' out o' it's maw. I want ter see ther fun up yender. Come on, boy; come on!"

Ben had already begun the scramble. Richard imitated his example, and together they scaled the rocks until they reached the spot where the rest of the train lay turned over. Men were gathered there, and talking rapidly.

"No, there wasn't many hurt," were the first words heard, "but why should there be? There was nobody aboard but the crew."

"No passengers, eh?"

"None. Still, if we had gone a few yards more, far enough to reach that trestle, not a man would have lived to tell the tale."

"Close call, that's a fact. Strange they should wreck you so close to the town."

"They thought you would all be asleep, and reckless men don't stop for trifles. But, say, how came you to be on hand so quick?"

"We were watching for them."

"You were? Then why the dickens didn't you stop them?"

"We were on the other side of the curve."

"If you knew their plans, you had no business to be there."

"Wal, you're alive, ain't ye? Further than that ask Sheriff Nahum West. He engineered our movements."

"A great sheriff he must be. Here is the train a wreck, and some of the boys are hurt. I shall call your sheriff to task."

"Nahum West is here to speak for himself."

With this a man stalked into the circle of light that had been made by lighting a lantern that had escaped the wreck. It was the officer named, and he bore himself with an affectation of dignity that was striking. If he failed to be dignified in reality the will was there.

"Let this cavillin' stop!" he added, severely. "I have proceeded thus after consultation with the best men of Jericho."

"What men?"

"Foster Harrington was one."

"He advised you to let the wreck go on, did he?" hotly returned the railroad man.

"No, he didn't, but he said this was the place to get the wreckers, and that is why we tried it here."

"Did you have time to flag the train further back?"

"Well, that was my advice, but Harrington said do it here, and we all know his judgment is good."

"If he wanted to murder this crew his judgment was mighty good!"

There was a murmur of approval from the rest of the crew, but the citizens of Jericho objected. All had been planned for the best if Harrington did it, they asserted, and it was only bad luck if things had gone wrong.

Redglove Richard was not so willing to find an excuse. His antipathy to Harrington made him quick to suspect him of anything that could be charged against him, and the idea came to him, then and there, that Foster had been party to the wreck.

He remembered, too, that Hiram Brown had used strange words when he believed he lay dying. Hiram had hinted at a crime under way, declaring that it was not then too late to stop it; and, when Richard recalled that Hiram was a tool of Harrington's, he thought he saw further into the plot than anybody else.

When the men had satisfied themselves with discussion, there was a sort of inventory. It was found that not one of the wreckers was captured. By wonderful good luck, too, none of the crew had

lost his life. The engineer, who had been shot down in his cab, had a wound that would lay him up for some time, but he was not dangerously injured.

The train had suffered severely. The locomotive had been crushed against the second tier of cliffs, and of the cars four out of six were destroyed. All had been thrown clear of the track, and one had fallen into the valley.

Rude surgery had been applied to the wounded engineer, and messengers were sent to seek for a skilled worker in that line. Jericho had two doctors, and they were ambitious rivals, but neither had been on the scene. It was very clear that one or both were needed, and there had been loud calls for them.

Suddenly a tall, lank man forced his way forward, pushing other persons rudely aside, and a cry rose from the miners.

"Doctor Dowe!"

There was one man who started at the exclamation. Redglove Richard had found nothing to do, and he was looking on idly when the name was thus shouted.

To him it meant something, and, when he caught sight of the physician, there was a sudden change in his expression which meant just as much. He did not see any stranger.

Dowe lost no time. He knelt by the wounded man, and it was soon made manifest that he knew his business. With quick, nervous, but cunning, hands he handled the wound and dressed it in the best of style.

He had his peculiarity of appearance. He was slender to the degree of attenuation, and his skin seemed to cling to his bones without the intrusion of flesh. This appearance was heightened by the fact that his face was beardless except for an almost invisible mustache, and that both this sparse growth and his hair were of such a light shade of brown as to be almost colorless.

When his task was over he gave directions to have the engineer removed to the town, and still his way was that of a skillful doctor. It was his order that a bed be brought, and nothing risked by carrying him in the arms of the men without this adjunct.

Next he turned and walked down the ledge. His fellow-citizens paid no attention to him, but there was one man who moved quietly after, and, when he reached the valley, fell in behind him.

This was Redglove Richard.

It was the rover's intention to accost the doctor, but he wanted to see whence he went first.

Dowe's course was peculiar. Once on the level he cast a swift glance around, and, finding, as he thought, that he was free from scrutiny, he walked rapidly toward the north, keeping close to the base of the cliffs.

Redglove Richard kept even closer. He followed, and he pressed so close to the rocks that his form was wholly indistinguishable, even when Dowe looked back, as he did several times.

"There is something to be hidden in all this," mused the rover. "Martin Dowe never breathed without some scheme in his mind, and as he is with Harrington, it is safe to infer that he had gone deep into evil since I knew him. Aha! What now?"

The doctor had paused, and he had been joined by another man.

"This is interesting!" thought Richard. "Why does this person skulk here when every one else is trying to do a good turn to the wounded?"

He held his place and watched sharply. In one sense there was but little to see, but it was none the less interesting. They spoke hurriedly and earnestly for several minutes, and then separated and went different directions. Dowe hastened

toward the town, while the second man's course was toward the scene of the wreck.

Richard pressed closer to the cliff and let him pass. The rover could almost have touched him as he went, but there was no betraying discovery.

"I will know who you are," the watcher decided.

Again he followed, and the step bore fruit. The stranger reached the point of interest, hastened up the rocks and joined those who remained there.

"Foster Harrington!" was the cry.

Richard heard with profound satisfaction. He had not had light enough to help him recognize his man, but he was not surprised. This time he hung well back, but the words that ensued were easily distinguished by him.

"Men!" shouted Harrington, bluffly. "I am with you again. Would that I had been with you before, but it was out of the question. This has been a sad business."

"Pretty near murder, sir," agreed a miner.

"Thank Providence it was not. All live, and some of us live for vengeance. The guilty shall be found, and made to see that Jericho is not the place for their fiendish deeds."

"Hurrah for Harrington!" was the yell.

"We must take this matter up at once, and, my word for it, we will mete out full punishment. I may say I have a personal interest in the affair. I have been a prisoner of the villains!"

"How was that?"

"I laid a fine plan to beat them. It was to stop the train a mile east of here, and then arm the crew with rifles, add a few bullets of my own, and thus surprise the surprisers. My plan went wrong. I was captured, and have only escaped from them now—a mighty close shave at that. Boys, we still live, and we will right this wrong and clear the fair name of our town if it takes us a year. Death to all wreckers, say I!"

Harrington was somewhat of an orator, and, as he had his audience with him, he was met with ringing cheers. If there had been a disposition to censure him before it was gone now.

He proceeded to give an account of his alleged captivity, and he impressed all but Richard. That man was a skeptic, just then.

"The scoundrel lies! He has not been a prisoner, and his furtive interview with Dowe tells a tale of guilty complicity in the wreck. I will look to the pair later on!"

There was no more to do by the track. A few men had kept on in pursuit of the wreckers—an aimless chase—and a guard was posted by the cars to see that nothing was stolen. Then everybody else went back to Jericho and the event seemed to be over.

Redglove Richard and Ben Bitters walked together. The former had kept out of Harrington's sight, and nobody had time to be interested in the rover.

Richard felt like going to bed, and, as there did not seem to be any good reason to defer the step, he went accordingly. Having good nerves he was not long in falling asleep, and there seemed to be cause to expect a peaceful night from that time on.

Nevertheless, there was an interruption. He was finally aroused by a pounding at the door, and, when he had stirred himself enough to listen, he could distinguish a call for him to awake.

"What's wanted?" he demanded.

"Say, do yer want ter attend ther lynchin'?"

"Who's to be lynched?"

"Why, the train wreckers."

"Are they captured?"

"So some say. Thar ain't no proof, but we don't always wait for proof. Anyhow, there will be the fun, so turn out."

Richard hastened to the door. He saw

one of the men whose acquaintance he had made the night before, and the dim suspicion that a joke was being played on him vanished.

"What's all of this?" he demanded.

"Ter put et briefly, Sheriff West has arrested two men an' a woman on suspicion, an', as their characters ain't good, ther boyees have concluded ter take a hand without waiting fer law. Thar is a mob at ther jail, an' you will have ter hurry ter see ther fun. Come on!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MADNESS OF THE MOB.

Redglove Richard had already seen enough of Jericho to believe that it was not the place where a meek and timid person would find congenial scenes. He was not surprised when he heard that violence was contemplated. He began to dress hurriedly, questioning his informant as he did so.

"Who are these persons under arrest?"

"Oh! thar are a dozen o' them, all told, but the leader is a sartain Reuel Cragoff."

"Who is he?"

"He works in the Clear-Cut Mine."

"What had he to do with the wreck?"

"Nobody knows, but Reuel is a retired railroad robber, and he is equal to anything, you see."

"A retired robber? How is that?"

"He was once a robber—not a wrecker, fer he never did anything o' that sort, as I know on; but he used ter hold up trains an' sack them. He had a reg'lar band, an' was a bad 'un all 'round. He retired a few years ago, an' fer three year he has been workin' in ther mine hyer, but it seems his develtry broke loose."

"What is the proof against him?"

"Thar ain't none."

"And do you mean to say the mob will hang him?"

"His reputation is responsible."

"Is there nothing more?"

"No more," was the cheerful response.

"Does Dowe know of this?"

"He was the one who arrested Cragoff, and he does know what the boyees have in mind. He asked them not ter do it, but when they said they would, he jest remarked: 'Wal I s'pose you must have a little recreation, now' an' then!'"

Richard was full of indignation. He believed he could see why these victims were to be offered up. Unless he was much in error Harrington and Dowe should be in the place of the accused prisoners, and they had stirred up the mob just to hide their own guilt.

A victim was wanted—they had furnished one.

Richard asked more questions and received information. The chief among the prisoners were Reuel Cragoff, his wife Moll, and a man named Juan Mores, who was supposed to have been with Reuel on his old raids; and the others were miners who worked with Reuel and Juan in the Clear-Cut Mine.

All of these persons had been arrested by Dowe because Reuel had once been a law-breaker, and because the others lived near him outside the town proper.

By the time all this had been told Richard and his guide were traveling the streets, their faces toward the jail. The rover was wondering just what he would do. Certainly he did not intend to stand idle and see anybody hanged without due proof. How much he would do to impress his views upon the mob he did not know.

Almost the entire population of Jericho was before the jail doors, and, as one-half of their number were burly miners, it was an ominous party in their wrath. Just then it seemed as if all were bent upon having the blood of the prisoners, and loud yells rose to bespeak their feeling, but Richard soon discovered that this was not a unanimous condit' on of mind.

Some of them stood on the outskirts

and looked black and ugly when their fellows shouted for victims.

There was a lull, and Richard soon learned its cause. Dan Wallace was the jailer, and he stood to his post with ready revolvers, vowing that no mob could take his charges until they had walked over his body.

Dan was himself the soul of honesty, and everybody knew it, and as he was of great strength and skill as a marksman, there was much hesitation about attacking him.

Those nearest to the faithful official were arguing, but, if they failed to convince him, he was equally unsuccessful, and he was doing no more than to delay the catastrophe and prove his own common sense and valor.

As Redglove Richard looked closer he saw that the men who called the loudest for the prisoners were not the miners. The front rank of the mob was made up of well-dressed men and bummers. In this desperate demand these classes were united, while the miners stood back and either echoed the call feebly or scowled upon those in front.

"They resent this outrage to one of their own occupation," thought Richard. "The so-called leading citizens—the clerks and business men—lead the demand, and the bummers have taken up the cry. The miners are not with them."

Those who talked with Dan Wallace had wearied of the argument. They had grown very angry, and there was a surge to the front ranks that told of the impatience of the lynchers. Finally the cry broke loose in a chorus that drowned all else:

"Lynch them! Lynch them!"

Forward surged the men, and Dan Wallace threw up his revolvers to use immediately, but another person broke fiercely into the front rank and, wheeling, faced the mob.

"Stop!" he thundered.

The mob halted.

He who had stayed them was breathing hard, as if from rapid running.

"Listen ter me! Listen ter me!" he shouted, further.

"No more speeches!" snarled the crowd.

"You will hear one more, and it will be from me!" declared the fearless stranger. "I prefer ter make my speech by word, but ef you force me to it, 'twill be by bullet. Which will you have?"

It took courage to check such a mob. This man had the courage. It was all he did have to recommend him. He was coarse and brutal of aspect, but he did not fear his opponents. They knew it; he was given the audience that bravery exacts in crises.

"All I ask of you," he proceeded, "is that you will let me make my position clear. You know me. I am Jake Griffin, an' I work in the Clear-Cut Mine. I am here for justice, an' no more. Will somebody tell me what proof thar is against Reuel Cragoff?"

"He used ter be a robber," somebody remarked, feebly.

"What in thunder has that got ter do with it? You have let him live in this town fer years as one o' your citizens. By doin' that you waived all claims ter criticise his past record. Who kin prove he had any hand in this wreck ter-night?"

Nobody replied.

"That's it—I expected it. Nobody kin prove it. You have all lost your heads like fools. I have been huntin' fer Foster Harrington the last hour. Ef I had found him this business would have been checked. Thar would have been no lynchin' party here."

"Well, there is one here now."

"It had better get out. Listen ter me! Reuel Cragoff worked in the Clear-Cut Mine. So do I work thar. So do a good many other men I see in this party. Fellow-laborers in the Clear-Cut, be we goin' ter let one o' our number be lynched on mere suspicion?"

"Never!" howled some of the miners,

gloomy no longer, but filled with passion as they listened to their extemporaneous leader.

"That's whar I stand!—that's whar all stand who work in the mine whar Reuel Cragoff worked!" cried Jake Griffin. "Now you know it all. The men of the Clear-Cut won't see one o' their number murdered by no mob. Ef you try et you must fight us all!"

There was an answering roar from the mob.

"Understand me," added Griffin, "ef thar was any proof we woudn't be hyer, but no man kin murder one o' our men by this mad plan."

The lynchers were dumfounded. They saw that Griffin had enough men back of him to make his position one not to be disregarded. Even the hottest-headed disciple of Judge Lynch could see that a fight might mean the extermination of the people of Jericho.

There was a hurried consultation, and then the lynchers announced that they would recede from their position.

"Reuel Cragoff can await his trial," they proclaimed.

"Not hyer!" yelled a miner. "He was taken without evidence against him, an' that wasn't no fair shake. We demand that he be set free until some evidence is found."

"That's just," added Jake Griffin.

"Yes, yes!" howled the miners. "Set the prisoners free!"

They rushed forward, elbowing their adversaries out of the way, but once more Dan Wallace came into the game.

"Back!" he shouted. "Back, or I'll shoot you!"

Dan could shoot; the miners knew it; they halted.

"You've heard me before!" added the dauntless jailer. "You've heerd me say nobody could take the prisoners out. I say so again. I say that nobody enters here only by walkin' over my dead body!"

"But this is different, Dan," urged a miner.

"Not a bit!" was the sturdy retort.

"We want ter set Reuel free."

"You can't!"

"Come, don't be stubborn."

"I'm jailer hyer. Them men was put in my care by an officer. I will keep them hyer or die in tryin'!"

It was a manly stand, but it satisfied nobody. The two factions were full of bitterness, and as they hesitated they fell to arguing. Argument is folly; it is the parent of discord and crime. Very soon some of the men were fighting, and order was only restored after considerable trouble. Three men had been wounded, and their blood did not bring back good feeling.

Finally, as it became clear that Dan would maintain his position as long as life lasted, both factions receded from their position. All would then have been well had not each distrusted the other. Each wanted assurances that the other would not take advantage of the lull to do secret work, and neither would believe an assurance thus given.

There was more hard talk, and Jake Griffin made one threat that left worry behind it. His faction owned little besides the clothes they wore. The misguided lynchers owned houses and stores, and Jake did not forget it.

"You can't defy us," said Jake. "If you do we will burn every house in Jericho!"

It was an ominous threat, and, when one looked at the men he controlled, and noted the savage scowls on their faces, there was no such thing as laughing. The torch might yet be applied.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### IMPORTANT ARRIVALS.

The next morning the sun rose on Jericho and saw the town still in existence. No fire had been set, and no blood had been spilled except that before noted. The two factions had encamped before the doors of the jail to make sure

of the security they could not otherwise feel.

By the time day had dawned all had come to the conclusion that there would be no more risk during that day, so there was a general departure to the usual habitations of the various men.

More, Jericho rose to take up her usual thread of life. Stores opened, work in mines began, and one would have said that all differences were forever buried had it not been for sight of a few pickets posted by the rival factions.

The feud slept. It was far from dead. Redglove Richard had foreseen this condition of affairs, and when, finding that he was not needed in any way, he returned to his hotel, the previous night, he had gone to bed and slept soundly and long.

His indulgence in this respect compelled him to eat breakfast alone. When it was done he strolled to the public room and listened to the gossip while he smoked.

Jericho was anxious, uneasy, and nervous. All felt that trouble was ahead, though there were differences of opinion as to how it would strike.

Presently, as Richard sat by the window, he heard the sound of horses' feet, and when he glanced out he saw two riders at the hotel door. Each was worthy of a second look. The foremost was a Chinaman in the full garb of his race, and mounted upon a burro; the second was a white man, but one of a sort seldom seen in that region. He was of ponderous frame, though it was mostly in the way of circumference. He surely was not above the average height, but he was a mountain of flesh. His steed was a gigantic horse that had parted with most of his flesh long before, but had frame enough to carry even his master easily.

This pair paused in front of the hotel, both grinning with great good humor.

No guest was ever turned away from that resort, and the landlord hustled out to interview the new-comers.

"Want 'commodations?'" he demanded.

"Bload and loom, all samee," replied the Chinaman, still grinning.

"Yah, yah!" agreed his comrade, "Unt we vants somedings to eat mit ourselves, don't it?"

"Get right down and come in," directed the landlord.

"You see this, all light?" added the Chinaman.

He had drawn a book from his pocket and was holding it up to view.

"Yes, I see it."

"Want to buy book, all samee?"

"Yah, yah," supplemented the big man; "you gets you von of dese books by yourself, hey?"

"What's that got ter do with stoppin' at this hostelry?" snapped the hotel-keeper, eyeing the book suspiciously.

"Lis am a life of Glorge Washsatlun, our flirst Plesident."

"Yah," coincided the big man; "we sees the life of Shorge Washington mit ourselves."

"Tlerms clash," explained the Chinaman.

"Der books delivered when they comes them up here."

"Say!" exclaimed the landlord, "what yer givin' us?"

"We don't give him away, all samee. Tlerms clash! Best life of Glorge Washsatlun, flirst Plesident of our countly."

"Yah! Him first President, an' him von brave man. Him want some cherries when him small boy, an' he ask his fodder for dem. Der old shentlemens say

"Nein!" und so Shorge, he go an' get a hatchet und chop down dot cherry tree," continued the big man, beaming all over with good humor.

"Glorge, he flirst Plesident of our countly," reiterated the Chinaman. "Him gfeat man. Where we be now but flor him? He led our ancestors to battle, all samee."

"Yah, dot was true. Dey try to him kill off in a shooting match. Shorge say

dot they don't know how to shoot for anytings. So he make his son up to stand, und he place an apple on his head, und he make the boy stand 'way off in sight out of, und he shoot dot apple from his head off, py shiminy!"

"Say, ain't you gettin' another man mixed up with President George Washington?" demanded the landlord, sharply.

"Nein, nein! Dot vas so as I speak it."

"Book tellls it all," insisted the Chinaman, holding up the volume. "Glorge, our flirst Plesident, an' our greatest ancestor. Where we Melicans be to-day but for Plesident Washsatlun?"

"Let me get the rights of this," requested the landlord. "Have you a life o' President Washington there?"

"Yah!"

"Whar did you get it?"

"In Denver."

"And you want to sell it, eh?"

"Yah, it vas like this. My name, it vas Carl Swick. Mine friend here, he vas Li Gook. We get der shob of a book company to act as agents for dere publications, don't it? We travel all over dose Western States mit der life of Shorge Washington, und we sell der same on subscription by ourselves. Dot vas it."

"Thunder! you don't mean that you an' ther Chinee are reg'lar book agents, do ye?"

"Dot vas it. We sellee life Glorge Washsatlun for three dollars a book, and he was a light good bargain. He was flirst Plesident of our country, and we Melicans owe much to him."

"Yah!" added Swick, "und we ought to pay it now. Shorge vas a great man. He vas down in Virginia once by himself und he see an Indian princess named Pocohontas in danger her life to lose. She vas laid down on a rock by her enemies, with her head about to be crushed a club with. Shorge, he go along und offer himselluf as a sacrifice in her place. They accept his offer, und Pocohontas, she escape with herself; but when Shorge, he got to der stone, he snatches der club avay, kills seven men the club with, including Powhatan, und off he runs fast as he could carry his legs."

By this time the novel pair had all the hotel crowd as listeners. If anybody had doubted that they were what they had said—book agents—a little more conversation showed them that they had the appearance of good faith, for they had another book of printed contracts with spaces for subscribers to put down their names.

Book agents they certainly seemed to be, but they were the strangest of the sort that ever had come to Jericho.

They were strange even for their respective races. Both were the embodiment of good nature, and full of amiable smiles. Li Gook piped out his remarks in a keen treble, while Carl Swick had a little husky voice that came forth from over his massive double chin in a most ridiculous way. Carl seemed to have imbibed too much beer for the good of his voice.

The citizens showed a disposition to talk freely with these novel vendors, but none of them came forward to put down their names. Li Gook proved to be a typical book agent, however, and he proceeded to urge the point with persistence.

"We Melicans should know all about our ancestors," he asserted. "Ley fought, bled and died for us, and Glorge Washsatlun was the noblest Melican of them all, all samee. Bluy his life and see-ee allee 'bout him."

"Yah, dot vas so," agreed Swick. "We should all his life have, vor we need it in our business. He vas von great man."

"Him flirst Plesident."

"Vot vas der mater mit Shorge Washsatlun?"

"He's all right!"

Even the stern face of Redglove Richard relaxed into a smile. Li Gook and Carl took up the familiar words last recorded with zeal to make them sound

with great force. The result was comical. The Chinaman tried to use a deep bass, but could summon only a higher-pitched treble, while Carl's bass was no more than a stronger roar in his usual husky key.

It was regarded as about the funniest thing ever heard in Jericho.

Some of the men encouraged the mismatched pair to believe they would subscribe later on, and they decided to stop at the hotel.

"You take-ee good clare of lis burro," directed Li. "Him name Confucius."

"Yah," added Carl. "Unt look you a good deal oud vor dis horse o' mine. He vas an Arabian sharger dot I bought in Gentucky. His sire vas a favorite steed mit der Prince of Tunis. His name vas Tartary."

"You see lem doee what ley can," requested Li.

"Yah, like dese!"

Carl whistled to the animals, and then Confucius and the big horse began to dance in a grotesque fashion that proclaimed them as unique in their way as their masters.

When there had been enough of this, the animals were taken to the stable, and Li and Carl went to breakfast.

Redglove Richard strolled over to the jail. He found Dan Wallace seated in front of the door with a rifle laid across his knee, and looking the determined warrior to perfection. Except for this, there was no sign of trouble around the jail. The rover did not speak to Dan, but kept on his way and viewed the town more critically than he had done before. It he remained in Jericho as long as he had planned to do, he wanted to know all of its peculiarities, so he studied them then.

He passed Foster Harrington's house, but saw neither the master nor the mistress of the place.

It was not until he was on his way back to the hotel that he detected any marked evidence of the survival of the turbulent spirit of the previous night. Then, sight of a crowd gathered by the post-office led him to go that way.

He found a dozen of the well-dressed citizens in the group, and they were talking with animation and energy. He was just getting clew to their subject when there was an exclamation from one of their number, eager and sharp.

"There comes Harrington!"

"Good!" quickly added another. "Now I will put it to him direct."

Harrington was coming. The great man of Jericho was only a little over thirty years old, and, as he was not possessed of phenomenal outward gifts, he did not at once reveal the fact to an observer that he was a great man. He had impressed the fact upon Jericho by getting to the front and keeping there, so his greatness had to be admitted.

He was well-dressed and well-groomed, and would have done credit to his tailor, his barber, or himself, on the streets of Denver, and in Jericho he easily passed as a leader of fashion, though not loud of taste or ostentatious.

He advanced toward the group with a smile on his face.

He was the only one who smiled.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CALL IN CIPHER.

The man who had announced a wish to speak with Foster was named Gray, and he was a merchant. He opened conversation at once.

"Harrington," he cried, "what's to be done about this business of the men in jail?"

"Well, I suppose the law will take its usual course," he replied, smiling blandly.

"The lynchers tried to take theirs last night."

"That is past."

"Do you think the danger is over?"

"Why, yes. There will be no more trouble. Men sometimes do rash things in the heat of passion, but our citizens

are a law-abiding class, as a whole, and they will keep the peace."

"How about Jake Griffin and his followers? They demand the release of the prisoners."

"Jake will be more temperate, now the excitement is over. He and all his party have gone to work in the mines, as usual. That is past, too. There will be no more difficulty."

"If you think that, Harrington, you are mightily mistaken. The miners believe Reuel Cragoff innocent, and they will not allow him to lie in jail without a decided protest."

"Perhaps it would be as well to examine Cragoff at once, and, if we find him innocent, to set him free?"

"Innocent?" questioned Gray, with asperity.

"I said, if we found him innocent."

"Do you think he is?"

"Only an examination can determine that."

"Foster Harrington, I don't understand you. I distinctly heard you say last night that you were captive among the wreckers at the time when they were lying in wait for the train, and that you recognized Reuel Cragoff as one of their number."

"I've been told that before," he admitted, "but there has been a singular misapprehension. I was a captive among them, as I have said—except for that I should have foiled their schemes—but I have no reason to think Cragoff was among them—"

"You said he was!" hotly, from Gray. Foster waved his hand.

"Pardon me; I was misunderstood. I had not even a suspicion that he was one of them, and—"

"You stated that you recognized him as one of them!" insisted the merchant. "It was on the strength of your accusation that Reuel was arrested. A Dickens of a mess it got us into! The best men of Jericho came to lynch Cragoff, and we had to deal with them; and then came the miners, vowing Reuel was innocent, and swearing that they would take him away. Some five of us were opposed both to the lynchers and the miners, and we were in a most infernal fix. We wanted something authoritative to stand by, and a decisive voice to speak out. You were the only one who could speak out, for you were the one who had accused Cragoff—"

"I persist that I—"

"Now, where were you when the rival mobs were at the doors of the jail?"

Merchant Gray had done most of the talking, but he had done it by sheer force of lungs. Harrington had tried from the first to break in upon him, but Gray raised his voice and kept on in tones that sent his charges rolling toward the upper summits of the Rockies like trumpet blasts.

Gray was angry; he wanted to have his say; he was having it.

"Thomas, I am surprised at you!" reprovingly remarked Harrington, when he was permitted to speak. "A merchant should be more circumspect and set a good example."

"Hang the example!"

"I was misunderstood last night. What I really said was that the methods of the wreckers were very much like those of Reuel Cragoff. I did not intend to give the impression that I saw Reuel there."

"Then my ears are mighty poor!" sharply retorted Gray.

"I can't say as to that. My exact words were those I have quoted just now."

"How could so many men misunderstand you?"

"I cannot say as to that."

"It would be hard to explain!"

"All that is sure is that I was not correctly heard. I know nothing against Reuel, and my advice is that he be released."

"I shall oppose that."

"And I!"

Almost every man in the party joined in this chorus, and Harrington nodded amiably.

"The majority rules, of course. I have no disposition to take the direction of affairs upon myself, and it may be best to let the law take its course with Reuel."

"I am the last man to wish him ill," pursued Gray, "but he was a train robber years ago, and we know of nobody else so likely to have been in this work as he. He must be held on suspicion and duly tried."

"His associates may get ugly again."

"Jake Griffin is a desperate man, I think, and he is just as likely to lead his gang out again as not. He has made a threat to burn Jericho if he is not catered to; he must be watched."

"Jake is boisterous," admitted Harrington, "but we must remember that he and all of his associates are hard-working miners. They get their living by labor in our mines. Suppose they destroy Jericho? Who would lose more than they?"

"I have found that men do not care a rap for self-interest when they get mad. The miners of Jericho are like all other men, and they will forfeit their jobs if they wish to harm us. Watch out, or the torch will be applied to this town!"

It was a solemn warning, and Richard Kent felt that it was well founded. Harrington, however, while still maintaining a serious manner, expressed the belief that all trouble could be averted if the miners received due consideration.

There was no more contention among the speakers, but Richard saw that Gray was silenced, not convinced. As for the shadower, he had kept so far back that he did not appear to be seen by Harrington, while, on the other hand, he had good chance to study the first citizen of Jericho. He set Harrington down as a double-face by nature, and was sure that, on this occasion, he was lying to his associates and making an effort to keep in their good graces regardless of truth or anything else.

Richard did not doubt that Harrington had said he saw Reuel Cragoff among the wreckers, and it was a matter of wonder why he had so radically changed his position in the matter.

The interview was still under way when, as the rover shadower stood with his hands clasped behind his back, he was surprised to have something gently and suddenly thrust into their grasp.

Years of adventure had led him to command and use almost Indian-like composure, and, obeying an impulse, he imitated the caution of the unknown and simply closed his hands on the article.

It felt like paper, and when he had brought it forward, after a short pause, he found he was not mistaken. It seemed to be a folded sheet of note-paper.

For several minutes he continued his survey, but if the unknown was still one of the party, there was no sign from him.

Presently Richard walked away, and, in a retired place, examined the paper. The sheet was covered with strange characters, and, at first, he could make nothing out of them, but, as memory quickened, they became familiar.

When he had enjoyed the favor of the woman now known as Olivia Harrington they had made use of a cipher writing as an amusement. He had its counterpart in his grasp now, and when he had summoned his recollections more decisively he read as follows:

"Meet me by the double pine trees west of the town at four this afternoon. I have something to say that will interest you. In this fail not, for I shall be of more use to you than you may think. I have something new to tell you."

There was no signature.  
Richard knitted his brows.

"From Olivia, beyond doubt. The cipher was her invention, and nobody else would know of it—unless she has told Harrington."

The rover-shadower looked toward the west. Half a mile beyond the furthest house of Jericho he saw two pine trees growing side by side, almost on one set of roots, but spreading out considerably. There were other like trees near them, but these were on high ground and plainly visible.

He could not doubt that he had found the place.

He resumed study of the note, and marked gravity was expressed on his face.

"I don't know about this thing," he muttered. "Can I trust Olivia? If I can, she has changed remarkably since I knew her before. So she wants to tell me something, does she?—wants to help me? The dickens she does! Yes, when the snake wants to aid the bird!"

A pause, and then the decision:

"I'm sure this is a trap, but I will go!"

## CHAPTER X.

### PLAIN TALK FROM REDGLOVE.

At two o'clock that afternoon Redglove Richard was at a point west of Jericho. He lay in a depression among the rocks and was smoking calmly and steadily. He was thus engaged when sounds among the rocks attracted his attention. He looked up and saw Ben Bitters crawling forward in a stealthy manner.

The lean, homely face of the mountain guide bore a well-satisfied smile, but he held up his hand to enjoin silence, and nothing was said until he reached Richard's side. Then he spoke.

"You was right!"

"You've done your work, then?"

"That I have, Redglove. I've been up by ther twin pines."

"What did you see?"

"Two men laid down in ambush!"

"Just as I expected."

"They're layin' fer you, Redglove, fer sure."

"Let them keep it up. I don't care a rap."

"No. The scared game don't go ter ther trap."

"Not always, perhaps; but it will go, this time."

"What! you don't mean you are goin' ter keep that app'ntment, do yer?" Ben cried, in surprise.

"I do. I know now that the plan is to lure me into difficulty, and probably those concerned in it want to shoot me. All right! I am going to see it out, and if they try mischief, they may find that I am there in visible form."

"You will go, knowin' that two toughs are layin' in ambush fer you?"

"Yes, pard Ben."

There was a quiet composure in Richard's manner that made the old guide reach out and seize his hand with wild zeal.

"Redglove, put et thar!" he cried. "You're a boyee after my own heart, an' mighty different from some who have drifted inter the Wild West sence I walked its passes and prairies first. Go, lad, go, an' old Ben will go with yer!"

"Do you mean it?"

"Bet yer last ounce!"

"There may be fighting."

"Thar will be, ef them durned galoots cut up ugly toward you. Lad, jest you trust me again as you have done afore. I used my border craft, this trip, and crawled up unbeknownst ter them, an' I kin do et again. Go, and see who will meet yer, ef anybody does. Them snakes will be in ambush. Good! So will Ben Bitters, an' Ben has got a fang. Ef thar is fightin', jest you depend on yer obedient sarvant ter hew his bigness inter them. See?"

"I accept you offer gladly. I want to see if this decoy is baited with more than the two fellows in ambush. I can afford to miss no chance. I am human, and I can't fight all Jericho with hopes

of success. I shall be glad to have you along to help me in a tight pinch, if one comes, pard Ben."

"Et will come, Redglove, an' oh! Susanna, won't we have some fun!"

Bitters broke into a chuckle, and seemed to mean all he said. He was not a polished character, and his ways were those of the wild life he had lived from youth; but good humor was his unfailing characteristic, and Richard believed he was to be trusted fully.

"I have told you something about my opinion of Harrington," pursued Richard, "and that I can regard him only as my enemy. I repeat that, and I add that if he is not a first-class knave, even in his association with the men of Jericho, I am greatly mistaken."

"I ain't much faith in the critter."

"He is double-dealing with them even now. Just how he stands, I can't say, but he is not honest and frank."

"Thar was some mighty queer things about his connection with the wreck last night."

"I believe there will be more before Jericho recovers its usual quiet."

"Be that as it may, count me in ter help you in anything you have on hand. I like yer way; so count me in!"

And he was a good friend to have!

It lacked but little more than an hour of the time when the rover-shadower was to meet the writer of the note, so Ben soon proceeded to the next step in his work. He left Richard as secretly as he had come, and crawled off with Indian cunning toward the twin pines.

Whoever might be in ambush, Ben would be there.

The shadower timed himself with scrupulous care, and started for the pines in due season. His own movements were open and free. He walked up the range with directness, and, finally, neared the rendezvous. He looked sharply about, but could see neither the ambishers nor Ben Bitters. He appeared to have the scene all to himself.

He sat down on a rock close by the pines and relapsed into affected indifference.

It was past four before he heard any sounds near at hand. Then a man approached.

It was Foster Harrington.

The avenger did not rise. He looked quietly at the leading citizen of Jericho and awaited his approach. Foster came on firmly at first, but with a perceptible hesitation when he noted Richard's stolid manner. Finally he bestirred himself and walked directly up to the man on the rock.

"You have an appointment?" he began.

"How do you know that?"

"I have come in place of my wife," he added.

"Why?"

"My wife is not well. She has told me of your call upon her, and I am here to act as her substitute now."

"Proceed!"

"She—ah!—wished to say you were mistaken on the former occasion, you see."

"Have you come so far to tell me this?"

"I want to talk with you. They call you Smith down at Jericho, but I learn that you are a brother of my former partner, Noel Kent. As such you would have been welcome to my home had you seen fit to call openly upon me."

"I didn't call secretly, but we will let that pass. I did not care to be received familiarly by you."

Harrington looked around furtively, as if to make sure his own tools were not near enough to overhear him.

"You have made serious charges against me, Mr. Kent. Your brother and I were partners and good friends. I never knew a more pleasant man than Noel Kent. I grieved for him deeply when he lost his life so tragically—"

"Then he is dead?"

"Can it be doubted? It is two years

since the Lost Train disappeared, and nothing has even been seen of it, or its unfortunate crew and few passengers. If they lived, would not some one or more of them have been seen before now?"

"As I understand it, you and Noel placed all your money—his and yours—in a canvas bag—the dust you had mined at the Yellow Jack claim—and he undertook to convey it to Denver. This bag of gold dust—his fortune and yours—was lost with the train that went out of sight so mysteriously?"

"You have the facts correct, Mr. Kent."

"What do you think became of that train?"

"I have long ceased to hold a theory, for all known theories have been tried in vain. I hunted, myself, along the course of the railroad; I had men that I knew to be faithful and shrewd to hunt; and the main railroad, as represented by its officers in the Eastern cities, sent high-salaried men from their private offices. All that skill and money could do to find something was done. All failed. That train never was found. Men and cars had alike vanished."

"I have heard of the Lost Train. What is your theory?"

"Mr. Kent, I am anxious to know yours."

"Well, I have a theory, and it is this: I think you stole that train, men, money and all!"

"Ridiculous!"

"Flesh may not be an enduring substance, but iron is. A train could not be lost on these mountains and leave no sign unless human heads and human hands found a cunning way for it to be lost. There you have it, Harrington! You have seen fit to try to pump me here. That was well planned!"

Foster looked chagrined, but quickly recovered.

"I see I need not expect anything like justice from you, but I think I can convince you that I am in earnest in all I say. Give me a theory, if you have one, and I'll try it, though it costs me half of my fortune. I want to know what became of Noel."

"I am going to learn just that; that is the prime incentive to my shadow-work. I shall play a lone hand, for I do intend to solve the mystery of the Lost Train. But what do you suppose that will mean to you?"

"It will give me great satisfaction, Mr. Kent. I have long wished to see the mystery solved, and I renew my hopes now. You will be spurred on by a brother's zeal, and you may beat the experts that have previously failed. I have a standing offer of ten thousand dollars to the man who solves the mystery. I will not insult a brother's devotion by speaking of a reward, but, sir, I will bear my share of any expense you may have to meet."

Richard gazed at his companion fixedly. Harrington had the air of one who was perfectly sincere, and the rover-shadower had new light on his nature. His patient mildness was that of a most subtle and dangerous person!

"Foster," he made answer, "we won't argue that point. Do you want to confess that you killed Noel Kent?"

"That I killed him?" cried Harrington. "Absurd!"

"Or that you came here to kill me?"

#### CHAPTER XI.

##### A REVOLVER IS DRAWN.

Redglove Richard's manner had changed. He had allowed Harrington to proceed until he saw what the man had to say, but it was done and he suddenly assumed an air of severity and hostility. He had not spoken in vain; the leading citizen of Jericho was plainly confused and worried.

"What's that?" he demanded.

"Have you come here to kill me?" Richard repeated.

"That's a ridiculous question!"

"The cloven foot shows. I was decoyed here, and with a fixed purpose. If you had wanted to talk with me with the friendliness you claim you never would have chosen this remote spot. A well-meaning man would have invited me openly to his house."

"I came to keep an appointment another could not keep—"

"How much help did you need?"

"Help? I needed none."

"How about the men hidden in ambush here?"

"Ah! murmured Foster, with another start, his manner changing.

"You want to decoy me. Proceed! Raise your voice! Call for your skulking bravos!"

"What would you have me say?"

"Exclaim, 'Come forth! Make the attack!'"

"I will do it if you wish," asserted Harrington, warmly. "You tempt me too far. Come forth! Make the attack!"

Ben Bitters emerged from cover, a smile on his lean face.

"Who shall I tackle?" he asked. "Be you the critter I am ter lambast?"

Harrington looked surprised and Richard's eyes were busy, expecting every moment to see Harrington's hirelines leap forth.

The leading citizen of Jericho was puzzled. He did not see his followers, and was shrewd enough to realize that the lank hunter was not to be regarded as a friend.

"I don't know you," he replied, stiffly.

"No great loss ter me," commented Ben.

"Why are you here?"

"You hollered an' I come."

"I repeat that I do not know you."

"Mister Man, mebbe I kin enlighten you a bit. Step this way a fraction—you an' Redglove—an' I'll give ye a notion as ter my fashions an' foibles, so ter speak. Come hyer!"

Ben motioned imperiously, and, as Harrington really wanted to discover where his men were, he allowed himself to be tempted a few feet away. The explanation was there.

Both of his ambushers lay bound hand and foot, and helpless as to motion and speech.

"I reckon you catch on," added the guide, grinning with high satisfaction. "I was the bellerin' bison that bound them! I found them hyer in ther rocks, so I sorter crept up onter them, one by one, an' tied them up. Don't they look ther Christmas turkey ter perfection?"

Harrington gazed hard at his tools, gagged and bound. He could have no aid from them. His plans had gone seriously awry, but he struggled to keep cool and find a way out of it all.

"These men are citizens of Jericho," he remarked, somewhat blusteringly.

"I reckon."

"I object to any of my town's-people being used thus. I will release them."

He advanced a pace, but Bitters threw up his rifle with a lock click that meant business.

"Mister," he spoke, quietly, "ef you teches them galoots I'll shoot a hole through you that you could drive a railroad train through!"

"But this is infamous!" cried Foster.

"Let us not bandy words," interrupted Richard. "Let us know each other, Harrington. You set these men to help you trap me; you have failed. My pard, it seems, has overcome them both and tied them up. They are out of the game. Harrington, you and I will settle this. We must fight!"

"Nonsense!"

"You carry a revolver; so do I. Draw!"

And Redglove produced his own weap-

on and threw himself into position as he spoke.

"Draw, or fall like a fleeing snake!" he added, with terrible intensity. "The Shadower is here for revenge, and I am the avenger!"

Foster was a trifle pale, but he neither drew his revolver nor fell back. He folded his arms with coolness that spoke well for his courage.

"I am no butcher," he announced, firmly. "I will not fight. You have today charged me with things of which I am wholly innocent. When Noel Kent went out of sight I lost not only my half of a big fortune, but a friend who had been more to me than any partner I ever had. Noel was my true, trusted, valued friend. If his brother unjustly accuses me, and sees fit to murder me, I have nothing to say. Proceed!"

"Foster Harrington, you are cunning enough to know this has been a farce. You realize that my threats were empty ones, and that I had no intention of doing harm to you. Enough! Let it go. You can now return to Jericho in perfect safety."

"That is more manly—"

"Spare your words! You and I understand each other. I am your enemy, but I shall take no advantage inconsistent with honor. See to it that you do not try to do otherwise."

"You are still unjust—"

"You lured me here to kill me, and yonder tied-up bravos would have done the job well had not I suspected the trap, reconnoitred, found them in ambush and beaten them at their own game. Drop sentimentality. You can go now, sir!"

Harrington looked toward his men.

"Don't fear for them," added Richard; "we will release them when you are gone."

"Hadn't we better tie them ter yender pine an' whale their hides with switches?" asked Ben Bitters. "Et might reform them."

"It would do no good."

"It would do me a powerful sight o' good, Pard Redglove."

Redglove looked at Harrington and pointed down the mountain.

"Go!" he commanded.

"This is hard—"

"Go!"

There was a sudden flash of fire in Harrington's manner, and his eyes gleamed dangerously. Quickly he regained composure, however.

"Unjust as you are, I accept your will."

With this the leading citizen turned and passed down the mountain side, and the shadower was convinced that his mind was a whirlpool of rage and enmity.

Ben Bitters was not of different opinion, and he shook his head gravely.

"You want to look out fer that critter!" the guide exclaimed, with emphasis. "He has about all o' Jericho at his beck an' call. Mighty big odds ter meet fer you, Redglove."

"Very true, Pard Ben, but I hope to hold my own. Now, release these tools of his. If they show fight we will shoot them, off-hand."

Ben obeyed, and, as the couple were without arms, they were meek enough. Ugly looks they did bestow, but they improved the opportunity to get away quickly.

Redglove and his ally returned to the town.

Landlord Pete Dunn was standing by a window when they reached the hotel, his gaze bent thoughtfully upon the eastern hills.

"Looking at the wreck?" asked Richard.

"I be. Queer things are goin' on up thar," Dunn answered.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE MEETING ON THE LEDGE.

"I noticed," responded the rover-shadower, "that a crowd was assembled by the wreck."

"What more did yer see?" asked the landlord.

"They seemed to be removing the freight from the cars and vicinity."

"That's jest it!" exclaimed Dunn.

"What do you see that is wrong in that?" Redglove asked.

"Who is doin' it? Is it the railroad company?"

"I was not aware that any agent of the company had arrived."

"None has come. This is a wild region, an' it takes some time ter get men hyer to work on such a case. Ther track was repaired by the scene o' the wreck enough so that ther mornin' train went through by means o' creepin' past ther wreck. Sence then the railroad company ain't been heard from."

"Who, then, is removing the freight?"

"Is it Sheriff Nahum West?"

"Well, is it?"

"Not any! Common folks like you an' me would say that, in a case like this, the charge o' affairs would naturally fall onto the sheriff. He ain't there."

"Why?"

"My opinion is that Nahum is a coward. Whar was he when the fight took place with the wreckers? At the rear! Whar was he when the rival mobs was by the jail? Nobody knows! Whar is he now? My opinion is that Nahum is at home, scared out o' his wits."

"An incompetent official, eh?"

"Jest so, sir; jest so, Redglove. Nahum was elected only six months ago ter succeed Bully Bob White, who died. Nahum's grit ain't been tested until now. I'm afraid et ain't in him."

"Then let us hope there will be no more trouble."

"But thar will!" exclaimed Dunn, earnestly. "Trouble is only jest begun. Do you think them rival mobs have hung up their guns fer good? Not much! I'm hyer whar both parties come ter imbibe, an' I tell you thar is trouble ahead."

"Over Reuel Cragoff?"

"Nobody else. One party says Reuel is guilty, an' they are bound ter keep him a prisoner. The other says Reuel is innocent, an' they demand that he be set free. I'm afraid there will be terrible times in Jericho yet."

"Where is Foster Harrington in this crisis?"

"Silent! Yes, by durn! He's silent! I told him what I feared, but he made light o' it. He said all would soon cool down, an' thar would be no trouble. Harrington is as shy as ther sheriff. Now, with our nat-ral leaders holdin' off, who is thar ter direct healthy public sentiment, an' stave off the two factors that hanker fer riot and gore?"

"Your leaders may yet act."

"Now is ther time. Them men by the wreck are plunderin' the cars, an' not one in authority moves ter stop them. I'm sure the most valuable things was all carried off last night. More are goin'. When ther railroad gets men hyer what will be left ter save?"

"Not a good outlook, surely."

"Plunder an' riot we have had here, an' the end ain't yet. My advice ter you, Redglove, is ter keep cartridges in yer revolvers, fer thar is goin' ter be hot times in this town. Mark that down!"

Richard felt that this presentment of the condition of affairs at Jericho was correct, and, when Dunn had returned to his work, the rover stood in deep thought until he was aroused by the appearance of Carl Swick and Li Gook.

The irrepressible book-agents generally made themselves heard where they went, and this was no exception to the

rule. They accosted the nearest man by the hotel:

"You lanter bluy life George Washatlun, all samee!" exclaimed Li, in his shrill treble. "Him gheat manee. Him first Plesident of lis country, and we ought to know all aboutee our ancestors. Where would we Melicans be but flor George Washatlun?"

"He vos von brave mans," added Carl Swick, in his husky whisper. "When he vas a poy he went the Mississippi river up mit his father. Der vessel vas burnin' up mit herself when dey vas halluf vay the journey gone. Dere vas but von life-preserver for der Washingtons, und der fodder say, 'Shorge, you vait here until to der shore I goes,' und mit dat he shumped overboard. Shorge, he vas left der burning deck on, und by Shimn Shiminy! der boy dot burning deck stood on whence all but him had fled, shoost because his fodder told him to stay there. I vorgot how he esgabed, but he vos von goot boy."

"He greateest man lat ever lived. He our ancester, and we Melicans ought to be ploud of him, all samee," chimed in Li Gook.

"Nodder time," pursued Swick, "he at Boston vas, und dere vas a vessel mit tea loaded, und der tax on it vas too much to suit Shorge, so he to der British soldiers say dot he vill dem beat; und he to der vessel goes und throws all der tea overboard, und den he dakes it inter Boston mit himselluf on a tug-boat, und der tax it vas paid not much, don'd it? Dot vas called der tea-party!"

"Him velly wise, good man," Li Gook asserted.

"Vot vas der matter mit Shorge Washington?"

Carl asked the question, and then the novel comrades rolled out the reply in their eccentric utterances:

"He's all right!"

The book-agents were making themselves known. Subscriptions for their volumes were beginning to come in, though chiefly because the agents were getting to be favorites. Now and then there was a half-hearted objection from somebody to Carl's habit of seizing upon all extant traditions and stories and applying them to President Washington, but Carl seemed perfectly sincere, and his jovial nature saved him even from reproof.

Richard Kent soon went to his room and slept for some hours. By night he found himself fresh for action, and, when it was fairly dark, he took his revolvers and left the town alone.

His course was toward the eastern hills. He went near the scene of the wreck and viewed it from a distance, but nothing of value was to be seen. He continued along the course of the railroad to the northwest.

He had not forgotten the Lost Train, and the railroad had a strong attraction for him. On one side lay Sunspot, the station from which the fated train had started; on the other Horse-foot, the place it never had reached. Between both and Jericho stretched many miles of wild mountain without human habitation.

Noel Kent had taken that train, and he had disappeared with it. Years had gone and no sign had come from him, but to Richard, the case was new. It moved him deeply. Noel had taken his betrothed wife from him, but it had proved to be his gain and Noel's great misfortune. Even if it had been different, Richard would still have been devoted to his brother, and anxious to solve his fate and punish the guilty persons, if, as he believed, there had been foul-play.

He walked a full mile toward the northwest, keeping close to the track. Now and then he thought of the so-called phantom train, but he was too prac-

tical to believe in such things, even if Ben Bitters did claim to have seen it.

Richard saw no ghostly train, nor any others.

It was a fine night, and he was fully sensible of it. He enjoyed his solitary walk.

Presently he turned back and neared Jericho again. He had deviated a trifle from his course to avoid a gulch. He passed along a narrow shelf of rock and came out upon a flat, table-like opening some fifty feet square.

His mind was occupied, and his steps mechanical, but he was suddenly brought back to the present time.

Before him appeared another human figure, and he stopped short in wonder when he saw that it was a woman. A second surprise followed.

It was Olivia Harrington!

Redglove stood inactive, but there was motion enough on the part of the woman. Fully revealed by the moonlight, she flung her arms up around her head and made various motions, which seemed to express deepest sorrow. A moan escaped her lips, and the rover found himself in a mood of close attention. What would come next he did not know, but the black-robed figure of the woman impressed him strongly.

Then came a change in her manner. She seemed to see him for the first time; a little cry broke forth, and she hastened toward him.

"Richard, Richard!"

She held out her arms to him; she uttered the words plaintively.

"Richard, hear me!"

It was like the outburst of one in overwhelming sorrow, and the rover was spellbound. She had hastened on until she was close to him.

"Let me speak to you!" she implored, her breath coming in gasps.

The detective recovered his self-possession with a start. The novelty of the situation was wearing off a little, and he realized that, though the conditions of the meeting were unique, the actors were human.

"I have not objected," he mildly responded.

"I have hunted for you!—I have looked through the mountain. It is a dreadful place by night, and the rocks are full of threatenings to me. It was so dark, so weird, so dangerous. I was frightened, terribly frightened!"

"Why, then, have you come?"

"To see you, to speak with you. I must, I will speak!"

#### CHAPTER XIII.

##### HUMAN FIRES BURN.

Redglove bowed gravely.

"As far as I know, nobody objects to your speaking with me. For one, I have no objection to make. Speak on!"

Olivia shivered, looked around upon the bleak rocks and drew her wraps closer around her.

"It is cold, cold!" she murmured.

"'Tis only your imagination, madam. The temperature is delightfully cool; no more. Calm yourself, and you will feel cold no longer. I see no cause for fear."

"I saw you ascend the mountain, and I came after you. I have hunted, but these foothills are endless. I found nothing, and I have wandered until, as you intimate, I am unnerved and scared. I will try to dispel the mood; I must be calm."

"That's right."

Redglove was eyeing her sharply. He had known Olivia well in the past, but never had he seen her so frightened as she seemed to be now. One thing he did know, that was that she was full of duplicity. He wondered if a new plot was under way.

He, too, looked sharply around him.

They appeared to be alone in the remote, desolate spot.

The rocks made good hiding-places, but he could see nobody.

"The hour is getting late," he proceeded, practically. "If you have anything to say you should improve the opportunity at once."

"Let me be calm. I must speak, and it must be to the point."

She pressed her hand to her heart and appeared to struggle for mastery over her weaker feelings. Redglove gave her all the time she wanted, and presently she spoke again.

"Richard," she softly whispered. "I have been thinking of what you said to me?"

"What part?"

"About Noel."

"Ah! Yes, we did speak of him."

"You have aroused terrible feelings in my mind."

"Why?"

"You—oh! it is hard to think of!—you intimated that you distrusted Foster Harrington."

"I don't regard Harrington as a full-fledged angel, I admit."

"I tried to see you to-day, but, when I had written to you, I got your note in reply saying that you could not meet me at the twin pines."

A skeptical smile flitted across Richard's face. His doubts were added to measurably, but his reply was prompt.

"I did write so," he returned.

A shadow crossed Olivia's face. The rover was ready to believe she was surprised by his ready acquiescence to her own fiction. If he was right, she did not seek for proof.

"I was, however, determined to see you, and I am here. I want to speak of Noel."

"Proceed!"

"What you told me at my home has disturbed me so dreadfully that peace has deserted me."

"Why should it?"

"You expressed the belief that Noel met with foul play."

"Just so."

"Do you—can you possibly think that?"

"I think just that."

"Terrible, terrible! It has brought back all the old life with startling clearness. Hope, happiness, ambition, and expectation died within me when Noel went from my sight—even life became a mockery. We were very happy in our married life, and we were all in all to each other. I can truthfully say that no shadow of discord ever crossed our horizon. It was death to worldly happiness when I lost him."

Olivia was tragic. She wrung her hands, and her voice was broken by sobs. To her companion her face looked pale in the moonlight, and she wavered and rested her hand against the rocky wall beside her.

Redglove watched her with unfailing curiosity. He had seen her in all moods but this. With something new she became a study as she often had been in the past. He almost found his sympathies stirring within him. If his love for her was dead, that for his brother lived and was ever active. While she appealed to that emotion she could not fail to receive attention.

A look of gloom settled upon his own face.

"It is a question with me," he seriously replied, "whether I am wholly blameless in this matter. I am an old Western adventurer. I began the life when I was sixteen. Noel was new when he started out with you into this land of gold. He succeeded in accumulating money faster than I ever did, but he was inexperienced, nevertheless. He had been in Colorado but a few months when I heard he was here. I realized then that he was new. My conscience told

me I ought to join him—he was my brother—and show him how to seek gold. I didn't do it. I left him to fight it out alone. Well, he succeeded in one way, but not in another. He would never have gone out of sight so mysteriously if I had been along. Am I to blame because I did not join the boy as I was inclined to do?"

Redglove was revealing a new phase of his character. It was a long stretch of fancy to think he might be guilty in the matter. Some persons would have pronounced his feelings mere weakness, but, be that as it might, the mood was an honor to him.

His plain face looked loftily in its subdued emotion as the moon towered above the Rockies and touched him with its silver light.

Olivia seemed puzzled. She scanned her companion closely, and it was not until there had been a long pause that she answered:

"Surely, there is no room for you to blame yourself."

"Do you think so?"

"Most certainly."

"But I should have stood as a bulwark for him when he took that fatal train."

"Could you have foreseen that it would disappear from sight? No, no!—nobody could foresee that. My heart was with Noel then, but I saw him go without a suspicion that harm could come to him. The trains had always gone in safety, before—it would have been a mad person who had prophesied disaster then."

"Noel went with no forebodings?"

"He was light of heart and happy."

"No trace of emotion when he left you?—no lingering as if to part was painful?—no nervous apprehension?"

"There was none of these. He was affectionate, as he always was, but light of heart, nevertheless."

"What were his last words?"

Olivia hesitated, moved restlessly and then responded:

"He said to: 'Keep the light burning for me!—I'll drop in and surprise you one of these days!'"

Redglove Richard was giving close attention, but he started when he heard Olivia's tones then. Her voice was peculiar. She shivered, shrank closer to the cliff and looked around nervously. The rattling of a small, loose stone down the slope made her start afresh, and then she muttered something he did not hear.

Richard was again in his practical mood, and quick to observe trifles. Something now made the idea flash upon him that the woman had been acting a part before, but that she was now stirred to natural thoughts and conduct.

"There was something in that parting," thought the rover, "that worries her when she recalls it!"

Olivia did not long rest idle. She made a perceptible effort, and again her speech flowed fluently.

"There are times," she pursued, "when these mountains seem to raise their voices and cry aloud to me. Somewhere in their gloomy stretches lies the body of Noel Kent. It has received no burial, and I never have had the melancholy satisfaction of weeping over his grave. I know not where he sleeps, so every place from Sunspot to Horse-foot seems to me like his grave, and each rock calls aloud to me that I stand where my dead lies!"

"Did—did you love Noel so?" muttered Richard.

"Even so!"

"Yet, you married another man within a year."

"What could I do? Noel's death, and the loss of our fortune, left me alone and penniless. Hope had gone with happiness, and when Foster Harrington offered me the cover of his house, I went to it as the stricken woman goes to a nunnery."

"Have—have I wronged you so?" asked the rover, bewildered.

"You accused me of having been

knowing to some plot against Noel. In that you wronged me deeply, but let it pass. You claim he was plotted against, and that his life went out by violence. Is that true?"

Richard drew his muscular form up and his reply was dogged.

"I believe what I said."

"And that Foster Harrington was his enemy and slayer?"

"Yes."

"Then—oh! just Providence pity me!—what am I?" wailed Olivia.

"You are Mrs. Olivia Harrington."

"But if I have married the man who slew my loved husband—what then?—oh! what then?"

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### FLASHES ON THE SLOPE.

The brother of Noel Kent drew his breath with a deep gasp. He was a man of strong feeling, of impetuous action, and like the rude men among whom he had lived so long. He had usually resided remote from the refining influences of the law, and he had learned to be a law to himself to a degree that would have been dangerous in one less honorable of purpose.

Olivia had stirred him to the quick now, and he started forward with his face aflame with feeling.

"Then," he cried, deeply, "you should exact an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It was the old Jewish law, and this place is not more advanced than it was with them. See!—the mighty brow of the Rockies rears itself above us. What law can ever be more just here than that of right? If Foster Harrington has been what you suggest, what ought you to be to him? Let the blood of Noel Kent answer!"

Olivia hastened forward to Richard's side and grasped his arm.

"The way!" she sibilantly cried; "show me the way!"

"You have an arm, and so have I."

"The plan, the plan!"

"Any one, so that it gives an eye for an eye."

"You have studied the subject; tell me what to do!"

"You!—you! Olivia, you are a woman!"

"Ay, and one who has loved. Have I lost all but treachery and crime? The proof!—I demand the proof!"

"It must be found—"

"How—where?"

Olivia was a volcano. She hovered over the rover, her face advanced until it almost touched his, and her face, voice and manner full of intensity. To Richard the air seemed to grow hot and stifling around them, and he appeared more like an object floating in space, weighted down with the glare and oppression, than a simple mountaineer standing on the immovable rock of the range.

"Time must decide that," he muttered, uneasily.

"But there must be no delay if it can be helped. Your plan!—your plan! What can I do?—what will you do?"

Redglove Richard set his teeth hard and his face was pallid. Not for a moment had he lost his distrust of Olivia Harrington, but she had dulled his powers of resistance. There was nothing uncanny about it; it was not the influence of a stronger mind upon a weaker, for that Olivia did not possess, but this woman had been beloved by him once; and the old influence bubbled up and mingled with hatred, distrust, perplexity and the dramatic action of the woman to confuse and bewilder him.

Even in the presence of consummate acting such as Olivia was showing he kept fixedly to his purpose. He could not believe in her; he would not believe, and did not waver.

But he was there to learn Noel Kent's fate. If he rejected Olivia, the last chance might be gone. He must turn from his way of simple truth and act the diplomat.

With stubborn purpose he set himself anew on his feet, and his face had the same stony firmness of the cliff by his side.

"I don't know," he steadily returned, "how there can be any plan. The eagle don't have any when it swoops down upon its prey. It simply watches for a chance, and then, when it comes, rushes to victory."

"But, surely, you have some idea as to the work you are to do?"

"Nothing definite."

"Noel was not lost in Jericho. Can you hope to find anything here?"

"Harrington is here."

"What will you do to him? What can we do? Look!—I am only a woman, and these hands may be weak, but my heart is strong. 'Tis the heart that loved Noel Kent. If he was wronged I will strike to repair the wrong, let the consequences be what they may to me. Tell me, what can I do?—what can we do?"

Redglove leaned heavily against the rock and spoke with deliberation and firmness.

"What you do must be done at home. Harrington is there; you are there. 'Tis your striking place. Wait, watch, work, and let nothing pass you by."

"But the way, the way?"

"Has no sign been left of the tragedy? All evidence is rarely destroyed after a crime. Does your house contain nothing? Are there no papers, no traces that tell of the event?"

"I fear there is nothing; I think I may say with safety, there is no sign to be found now."

"You have the wit of a woman, and that means that you should be fertile of expedients. Use your wits now. Watch! Something may come of it."

"I could wish for a more active plan, but I see nothing more to do than you suggest. I will work and watch, and I'll use my wits. If there is anything to be discovered I will see it—ay, I will avenge Noel Kent. He was my all; I will avenge him. And you—what is to be your part?"

Again her face was near Redglove's, but she was not then a tragic actress. He was free from her personality, and with this freedom came increase of power as well as additional distrust of her.

"Just now," he answered, slowly, "I see nothing to do but to hunt through Colorado. I do not believe all the men who went on the Lost Train that day died in the mountains. They have been hired to absent themselves, but the miner rarely forgets his calling. In some camp the survivors must be found, and found they shall be."

"And then?"

"Then they can tell the story of the loss of the train."

A deep breath passed Olivia's lips. It was like a profound sigh of relief. The rover heard and was gratified. He had yielded to her importunities and made a reply, but it was one wide of his real thoughts and intentions.

Now, unless he erred in understanding, it had given relief to his companion. His strategy was bearing fruits.

"Have you men searching as you mention?" she continued.

"No. That is my work."

"But you are not searching."

"There is time enough. Two years have passed since the Lost Train disappeared. A little more time will make no difference."

Olivia peered into Redglove's face. She appeared to be dissatisfied and uncertain.

"Can we do no more?"

"I think of nothing now."

"I would be more active. I would let no sleep come to my eyes until the first blow had been struck, and it should

be the beginning of a speedy end. Now that I doubt Foster Harrington, now that I fear it was not by chance Noel went out of my sight, now that my thoughts run in this new channel—now, I say, I burn with desire to know the truth, to do justice to the lost one, to avenge him to the uttermost!"

"Quite natural, but you never will do it by precipitation. Go slow! The world was not made in a minute. Go slow, but let the progress be sure."

"I must see you often. I want to tell you of all I learn, and hear from you all that you discover."

"Easily done."

"Then we can meet now and then?"

"Yes."

"Be it so. We are leagued to get the truth of this. If Foster Harrington be innocent, we shall not have done harm to his reputation or person. If he harmed Noel—well, if I have a woman's heart, I have a womanly hand that can wield a revolver or a knife."

"Well said, well said, but I don't imagine there will be any need of weapons. There is law in Colorado, thank Providence! and where law exists man should be subordinate to it. I've lived where there was no law, and I lived according to my surroundings. Here there is law, and it will avenge any wrongs."

"But there must be no turning back?"

"Right! Our faces are forward."

"Our eyes will investigate; our arms will avenge!"

Olivia wound her wraps closer about her form, and was ready to go. She declined Redglove's half-hesitating offer to escort her, though the declination was gentle, and then, after a few more words, she turned and left the table.

For a brief time her willowy form was visible in the moonlight; then she struck into a gulch and was seen no more by the watcher.

Richard sat down on a boulder and gave himself up to thought and muttered words.

"Remarkable, remarkable, re-markable!" he murmured, like one bewildered.

There was a period of silence; then he continued.

"Is she saint or sinner? She talked fair to me, and seemed to be all wrapped up in Noel. That looks reasonable. Noel was a winning lad, and everybody liked him. Yes, it seems reasonable. Her heart got calloused when she thought he was dead, and she took up with Foster Harrington as a last resort. She was a woman, alone in the world—she mentioned that, herself. Now, though, her mind has been turned back to Noel. Better ideas are in her mind. She will sacrifice all to avenge Noel, because she loved him. What woman could be less devoted to one like Noel? Olivia's better self has been awakened. Is that it?"

The rover raised his head and a sarcastic smile crossed his face.

"That is it, or 'twill be it—yes, when black is white, when night is day, evil is good, and when Olivia is somebody else. Saint or sinner? Easily answered! Foster Harrington and his beautiful wife have set a trap for me, and the bait has been offered! They used the wrong bait; I have seen Olivia before. I know her!"

Full five minutes of meditation ensued; then he spoke again.

"And yet, there may be something in it. Harrington is not a man to hold a woman's fancy, I imagine. Noel was. Olivia must see she has made a poor bargain, and she may be sincere in this. I will not be precipitate. She seemed sincere, at times. I'll keep in with her, and something may come of it. Yes, something may come of it!"

He slowly rose to his feet.

"I'll keep in with her. She may be sincere."

The decision was made, but if a good friend of Richard Kent had been near him then, he would have said that he had made a rash, a dangerous decision.

The rover was preparing to resume his way when he was startled by a new

sound. The report of a rifle suddenly burst upon the air, and a yell of pain and rage followed.

Redglove leaped to a better place of vantage; he looked eagerly up the range. Other shots sounded, and flashes of fire appeared to view.

"A fight!" he exclaimed. "I am needed there. I'll go!"

#### CHAPTER XV.

##### THE GIANT'S THREAT.

The rover lost no time in acting on his resolution. He bounded up the slope with the rapidity and confidence of one skilled in mountain work, and swiftly approached the quarter of interest.

The trouble there had not abated. Other shots had followed the first, and the tongues of flame showed often in a black spot where the moon did not cast its light. Shouts, too, echoed among the rocks, and there was every evidence of a desperate conflict.

Redglove Richard's zeal was not lessened by the fact that he believed he distinguished Ben Bitter's voice, and he hastened to the spot with long leaps.

As he rushed into the dark circle he saw the party. It was a confused mass, with half a dozen men struggling in one group, but Redglove quickly discovered that one man was contending with all the others.

He was holding them bravely, but the sheer weight of numbers had forced him back to dangerous ground. On one side yawned a precipice which had a descent of hundreds of feet, and close to this verge the single man had been driven.

He was undaunted, and, while his struggles continued, his voice sounded defiantly.

"Hyer's at ye, yer pesky critters! I don't keer ef thar is a hundred on ye—you'll find me right hyer as aforesaid. You're nothin' but cheap vagabonds, an' my nostrils don't like ye! Come on, an' I'll lick the whole blamed crowd while you wait."

It was Ben Bitters, and Redglove did not pause for a moment.

"I am with you, Ben!" he shouted. "Clear them out!"

The shooting had ceased, and the rover did not seek to add to it. He had picked up a pine club as he went, and it was admirably fitted for his purpose. He leaped into the midst of the affray, and his first blow felled a foeman. When he was down the club continued busy, and he sent them reeling right and left.

Bitters rallied, and his efforts were redoubled as he shouted like a wild Indian.

"Whoop! Get at them! Clean them out! Ya-whoop! Ya-whoop! Knock them dizzy! Ya-whoop!"

Dismay had seized upon the gang, and some of them fell back precipitately, but one gigantic fellow rushed upon Richard, evaded his guard, and clasped the rover around the waist.

"Over that precipice you go!" he grated, ferociously.

He was running Redglove back dangerously near the verge, but the latter rallied and checked him. It was hand to hand now, and the two men struggled desperately. The stranger was the more muscular, but Redglove had superior activity, and they were thus well matched.

Closer to the verge they reeled, and Richard, getting a chance view, saw the black chasm yawning by their side. One moment of weakness, or a mischance to the footing of either, would send both to sure death.

With feet planted on the very edge of the rock they fought on, while portions of both hung over the abyss. Death was close to them then, but Redglove had no desire to meet such a fate. He watched with keen attention, and, just when his opponent had relaxed his efforts a trifle, he flung the fellow the opposite way. Both tripped and fell, but they went down the solid rock.

It seemed to be no more than a reprieve, and Redglove was prepared to

continue the fight, but, to his surprise, the giant relaxed his efforts and lay passive.

"A trick!" thought the rover. He drew one of his revolvers, but the giant lay still.

Just then Ben Bitters moved forward, holding a man in his grasp.

"All over in this section!" he cheerfully exclaimed. "How goes it hyer, Redglove? Be they all swatted stiff?"

The giant struggled feebly.

"I am a dead man!" he muttered.

"Nonsense!" Richard exclaimed.

"I've got my last hurt."

"Not from my hand."

"I reckon I fell onter a knife. It's gone right through me, an' my life is peterin' out. I die, I die!"

"Then give repentance a show," suggested Ben.

"Ha! you will not have it all your own way. The Gold Grubbers will avenge me!"

Redglove had heard the name before. He started.

"The Gold Grubbers!" he exclaimed.

"Ay!" wildly cried the giant. "They have lost ter-night, but we were few. Thar are more—more—more! They are sworn ter avenge a comrade—they will avenge me! They will hunt ye as ther tiger hunts its prey! They will revenge—"

The giant ceased to speak and his head fell back.

"Dead!" exclaimed Ben Bitters.

"This is remarkable," replied the rover, "but his own theory seems to be correct. Yes, he was right; he fell upon a knife, and the blade was driven home. He is done with life."

"What was that queer name he used? —Gold what?"

"Gold Grubbers."

"What the deuce be they?"

"I have heard the name before, but I cannot explain. Whom have you there in your grasp?"

"One o' ther gang I sorter settled my grippers onter."

"Let us look at him."

"Oh, gentlemen!" tremulously cried the prisoner, "don't hurt me! I didn't mean you no harm, but I was led astray."

"Well, I should say you was, you dratted skunk!" exclaimed Ben, shaking his captive. "Ther man who tries ter send me ter the other world premature is mightily led astray. Yes, an' it costs them dear!"

"Oh! Oh! Don't do that! Don't kill me!"

"Humph! Why, I wouldn't so soil my hands!"

"Wrong, Ben, wrong!" exclaimed Redglove, seeing the use that could be made of the prisoner. "I don't approve of false mercy. We will kill him at once. Give me your knife! Do you hold him, and I will strike the blow—"

The trick worked well. The prisoner broke into a terrified yelp.

"Don't, don't!" he wailed. "Oh! I wasn't ther one that was ter blame. I meant well, an' now I repent."

"We shall have to finish him off, Ben."

"I reckon so," responded the guide, catching the idea.

"How did they happen to attack you?"

"Ter put et frank, I was huntin' fer signs o' them pesky train-wreckers. I reckon I found them, too. Anyhow, this gang jumped onter my back like a quartz rock. That's all I know."

"Then this man is one of the wreckers, and we can safely slay him?"

There was a fresh howl of fright from the captive.

"Don't, don't!" he implored. "I wasn't one o' them at all. I jest knew Sime Burt, an' he asked me ter come along."

"Is Sime one of the wreckers?"

"He was before you killed him," and the prisoner pointed to the lifeless giant.

"Oh! Then he was a Gold Grubber, was he?"

"Yes."

"What is a Gold Grubber?"

"I only know they were them men who wrecked ther train, but thar is more ter their work. Some o' ther leadin' men of Jericho are members o' ther gang."

"Who?"

"I don't know. I—I didn't want ter go in—it was too risky, an' Sime never would tell me anything definite."

"What more have they done than that one wreck?"

"I don't know."

"Where do they live?"

"I reckon they have a cave in these hills, but Sime never would admit it. Some live in ther hills, an' some at Jericho."

#### CHAPTER XVI.

##### THE PHANTOM TRAIN.

Redglove was not done, and questioned the prisoner sharply. The latter appeared to answer with sincerity. His name was Lige Rooks, a so-called miner, though little work he ever did. The fellow went more into details, but it left matters very nearly the same as before.

"Shall we set him free?" asked Redglove of his pard.

"Not at this point. The fight is over, but et wouldn't surprise me ef et was renewed. We may be under watch now. I say, hang onter Lige until we are nearer ter town."

"A good idea."

"We will deviate a bit from a direct line, too. Thar might be an ambush down thar where they would expect us ter go. Do you lead our man, an' I'll show ye a safer way."

"Well planned. Lead on, Benjamin."

Bitters took to the northern side of the hill, and thus worked along through the gulches until they were further away from Jericho than when they started.

"Now fer home," he remarked.

"Hark! Don't I hear a train?" Richard asked.

"Right you be! Ugh! My ears must be gettin' dull. Still, I should say ther train was now a mile away, fer it's dim-soundin', an—"

"Wrong! Look! A headlight shows in yonder black cut! Ah! It shoots out of the cut!—it runs on that high point of track."

"Redglove, look, look!" gasped Ben. "That ain't no genuine train at all! It's ther spook train!"

"What?" cried the rover, starting violently.

"Look fer yerself! Notice how little sound it makes! See how light et gets over the rails!—notice that every car is empty! You see a figger in ther cab, straight up and stony. What more do ye see? Whar is thar sign o' life?"

Ben Bitters's voice quavered and he seemed inclined to shrink back closer to the rocks.

"It's the spook train!" he persisted.

"Give me your rifle!"

Richard snatched the weapon from his companion's unresisting hand and flung it up to his shoulder, and aiming at the window of the cab, he pulled the trigger.

There was a flash, a report, and the bullet went its way, but the train, rolling easily along a high piece of track as it crossed a trestle, pursued its even way and the figure at the throttle did not turn its head or evince any signs of life.

The train disappeared around a curve.

Redglove stood still and looked where the train had vanished. Ben recovered a little of his nerve and chuckled audibly.

"Mebbe you'll deny that it's ther spook train now."

"I shall not deny that it is what you call the spook train."

"'Tis the ghost of ther Lost Train—ther train that men went on an' never was heerd from again."

"Can't we trap this thing? It is gone for to-night, but we can ambush it some other night. We will take position by the track and await its coming!"

"You'll have a long wait, fer the spook train don't show up more nor once in six months, they say, an' I guess that's about right."

"Well, I don't believe in ghosts, so I shall have to find a theory of my own. I have it, though I don't see the explanation of it. Come, let us go to the track and learn if this ghostly train has left any sign."

"Wait! You forgot our prisoner."

"Where is he?"

"By thunder! He has made off—no, hyer on ther ground."

"What's the fellow doing down there? Pick him up!"

"Say, I'll be durned ef he ain't fainted, or somethin' of that kind. More likely ther critter is playin' 'possum ter work some p'nt on us."

"The swoon seems to be genuine," decided Redglove, who was bending over Lige. "Can it be he was scared of the phantom train?"

"Wal, mebbe, mebbe. He don't seem ter me a very stiff-necked sister. Ghosts never really do hurt folks, but—"

"This fellow revives. He stirs; he sighs; he mutters obscurely."

"Well," exclaimed the rover shadower, "what is the matter with you?"

Lige looked around in terror.

"The train, the train!" he exclaimed. "Is it gone?"

"No. It has stopped over yonder and is waiting for you."

Lige made a desperate effort to get on his feet, but failed, and tumbled over against a rock. He seemed very weak in his legs. Richard set him partially upright, without much ceremony.

"What's all this crazy work about?" he demanded.

"Twas the ghost train!" cried the prisoner, shivering painfully.

"Just so. What do you think of it?"

"I am doomed!"

"For the next world, very likely. So you know about this phantom train? What is it, anyhow?"

"They say 'tis the ghost of the train that was lost in the mountains, two years ago. The real train went out of sight forever, but its ghost goes flitting through the hills just as the original did, long ago. That was it. When a man sees the ghost train it foretells his death!"

Lige almost wailed in his terror.

"This is my second warning," he moaned.

"Had you seen this train before?"

"Yes, a year ago, on the mountains. I was with Reuel Cragoff. It was a strange occurrence."

"So Reuel comes in, eh? Tell me all about it!"

#### CHAPTER XVII.

##### A STORY OF REUEL CRAGOFF.

Lige was so thoroughly frightened that it was a relief to pour out his sorrows, even to an enemy.

"You know Reuel Cragoff," he continued; "he is in jail at Jericho now."

"Yes," replied Redglove. "Never mind his history, Proceed!"

"I had been over on the east side of a small range north of here, an' I slipped from a ledge an' fell into a gulch. It was a nasty tumble, an', when I tried ter git up, I found my leg was sprained bad, and that was every prospect I would have to spend the night on the range, alone, weak, hungry, an' in sore pain, but who should come along but Reuel Cragoff.

"I never had known him except by sight, an' he was such a grim old chap that I didn't like his looks, but I will say he did the right thing then, for he jest packed me onto his back, an' off he started for Jericho. I ain't a big man, but he had ter stop often, of course. I reckon et was nigh midnight when we got along in this section. Then come ther part I want ter mention most. We was settin' down at our ease close ter the track, whar we had stopped fer rest, an' Reuel had sorter fell inter a thinkin' spell when that was a rumble on the rails.

"Thar's a train comin', says I, and jest then ther train come rushin' out o'

a cut an' right along toward us. I had heerd o' ther spook train, but never had seen it.

"Old Cragoff took one squint at ther train, an' then he leaped up like he had been shot. Ther moonlight fell on his face, an' I saw he was pale as death, an' his eyes glared like a madman's.

"All of a sudden he run forrud almost at the train, an', as it come glidin' toward him, he stretched out his hands like a man in wild prayer and called out, frantic-like:

"Stop, stop! Don't go past me! See, see—I am here—I, Reuel Cragoff! Let me speak with you!—let me speak!"

"He was still movin', an', ef his legs had not been mighty feeble, he might have got to the spot soon enough to touch the train. As it was he jest missed it, an', as it went rumblin' slowly past, et left Reuel with his arms still stretched out in that prayerful way.

"On went ther train, an' as the old man turned to foller it with his eyes, I could see tears glistenin' in them eyes, an' his features was convulsed with deep feeling, and when the train was out o' sight, he jest dropped on his knees, clasped his hands, and sung out in an awful voice:

"My sins have come home ter me! It is the ghost of the Lost Train, an' it never would have been but for me. This is a judgment upon me! My sins have found me out!"

"I tell you, gents," pursued Lige, earnestly, "Reuel jest about scared me stiff when he hollered like that, an' he capped ther climax by fallin' on ther ground an' moanin' like a wounded animal. Yes, stout old Reuel Cragoff did jest that."

"What did he mean by his sins having found him out?"

"I dunno, but you'll recall that he was a train-robber, once.

"I was scared 'most blue, but, after awhile, I summoned sand enough ter go along at a crawl ter where ther old man sat by the track. I spoke ter him gentle, an' then he looked up. There was an awful glare in his eyes, but it soon faded out, an' he got ter be like hisself. He soon resumed ther journey, an' took me all ther way ter Jericho—"

"But what talk did you have with him, further?"

"None. I asked him what he thought o' the matter, an' he told me that thing was the ghost train; but when I wanted ter talk some more, he shet up like a dog snappin' at a bone.

"Now, ef such a man as Reuel was so much afraid o' the train, it ain't no wonder common men are so, an' I have found they all be. It is said that 'tis a sure sign o' death to them as sees it."

"You are a condemned cheerful critter," drily remarked old Ben.

"A feller can't be cheerful with the shudder o' death hangin' over him."

"Nor when he's riskin' ther hangman's noose, as you be."

Redglove interrupted the speech of his companions.

"I am goin back to Jericho," he announced, abruptly. "Ben, unless you see more use for this prisoner than I do, we will set him free."

"Better shoot him," suggested Bitters, with a grin.

The rover-shadower delayed no longer, but, releasing Lige, with rapid steps, he pursued his way to town.

Not more than two hundred yards had been traveled, however, when Redglove, hurrying through a small, dark gulch, ran fully against a man, and force of habit, stirred by late adventures, led him to grasp the unknown by the throat.

There was no resistance, but melancholy cries rose, instead.

"Oh! Glood Melican man, no do that! Him clush my thloat, all samee. Let glo!"

"Yah, dot vas goot," added another voice from the darkness. "Der choke ain't no choke to der von dot gets choked, aind't it? You drop your hand off mit itself to your side, or der Chinee we shall half to bury."

Richard relaxed his grasp.

"What's this?" he demanded.

The man he had choked stooped quickly, picked up something from the ground and then held it forward.

"Lis am the blook of Glorge Washsatlun, all samee," he answered. "It is bound with a calf, and gotee bleautiful pictures. He was flirst Plesident of our country. He gheat man!"

"Yah, dot vas right," agreed his companion. "Der book a beauty vas, und bound inside a calf. Der bictures are daken der spot on by a blacksmith. Shorge Vashington should dwell in der hearts of all mankind, und der Chinees an' Americans. Shorge, he vonce vas at der battle of Lexington before it begun; und he rides mit his horse to dell der batriots to vake up und fight while he hung a lantern in der North Church steeple, und Shorge takes der name of Paul Revere und rides to spread der alarm with a poem."

Redglove was no longer disposed to throttle anybody. It was easy enough to recognize Li Gook and Carl Swick, though both were painfully upset by fright or something else—so much so that Carl's revised historical selections were being distorted worse than usual.

Old Ben chuckled in great good humor.

"Say, mister," he called out, "did you ever see President Washington?"

"Nein! Nein!" replied Carl. "I don't t'ink he lives in dis State, at bresent."

"Does the book you peddle give all ther things to tack onter him?"

"I cannot der English language read mit myselluf, but der facts I to you give, aind't it?" answered Carl, with some dignity. "He vas a good mans, und Li Gook und I knows it. Li, vat vas der matter mit Shorge Vashington?"

Carl motioned imperiously, and without his usual placidity.

"He vas all right!"

"He all light, all samee!"

Even stern-faced Richard Kent smiled. Carl had been in haste to pronounce the words they usually uttered in concert, but his haste had led Li Gook to be outstripped, and each sounded his reply in his own words, and with his own peculiar intonation fully revealed.

"Wal done, wal done!" commented Ben. "As book agents you are howlin' successes, an' I presume you'll sell as many out hyer in ther wild hills at midnight as anywhar else."

Redglove was not disposed to linger with the novel pair, so he abruptly bade them good night and walked off with Ben. There was silence until Goat-Track Valley was reached; then Bitters spoke again.

"Say, wasn't thar somethin' queer about them book peddlers?"

"How so?"

"Why were they snoopin' around in ther hills at such an hour?"

"Were we not there, too?"

"Different matter. We are men o' ther hills, an' they are onnatrals, as I may express it—tenderfeet and chumps. Queer they should be mousin' in ther hills at this hour. Furder, didn't ye notice how confused an' broke up they was when we come onter them?"

"They did seem confused."

"Yes, either scared or ashamed. Some mystery thar, Redglove."

"It can be nothing serious."

"I dunno about that. Li Gook an' Carl Swick sartainly seem ter be innocent as babies, but you can't tell. I say they had some mystery under way ter-night."

"It is immaterial. Ben, did you notice what Lige said about Reuel Cragoff?"

"So that is what you've been meditatin' on, eh?"

"Just so. If Lige reported the matter aright, Reuel was much broken up by sight of the phantom train. He said his sins had found him out, and took the blame of the phantom train upon himself—at least, so I interpret his speech as heard by Lige. Do you wonder I meditate on it? Reuel suddenly becomes an object of interest to me, and I am going to see him if I can."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE RED GLOVES.

The next day two men approached the jail. One was Richard Kent, and the other was a citizen of Jericho. Redglove had experienced some difficulty in getting admission to the jail, but he had enlisted the citizen after an interview with him.

Reaching the jail, they accosted Dan Wallace, and the citizen told the jailer to allow Richard to enter.

There was no objection, and the rover-shadower passed the big door, which was then closed behind him. He was locked in with the prisoners.

Jericho jail was never a bright place, and, in the dim light, he made out two figures directly ahead of him, and he knew they must be those of the old train-robber and his wife.

They stood still while the visitor advanced.

"Wal," growled the male prisoner, "what do yer want?"

"If you are Reuel Cragoff, I have come to see you, as a friend."

"Don't think ter gain any selfish end by lyin' ter me!" sharply exclaimed the prisoner. "No friend of mine would be hyer as a visitor."

"No, it is some trick!"

This came from the female prisoner, Moll Cragoff, and she pressed forward and shook her fist at Redglove.

"Don't you think," she added, "that you kin fool ther Cragoffs? We have been brought up in a school of trouble, an' our wits are sharpened by adversity. Our friend! Bah! You are a skulkin' spy!"

"That's it!" echoed Reuel, viciously. "You scoundrels ain't satisfied with shuttin' us up hyer like dogs, but you must send spies ter sniff at my heels as a cur does at a buck's!"

And Reuel advanced as if to seize Richard in a hostile grasp, but the visitor held up his hands, with open palms advanced.

"Wait!" he commanded. "Give me time and I—"

There had been an abrupt change in Reuel's manner. The old man was staring blankly at a point above Richard's head.

The latter was perplexed, but resumed: "I want to tell you who I am—"

Cragoff started, and, leaping forward suddenly, grasped one of Richard's wrists.

"Whar did you get them?" he demanded, and touched the red covering of Richard's hands, as if awed.

"The gloves? What do you know of them?"

"Where did you get them?—where? where?"

"Did you ever see any like them?"

"Say where they come from!"

"Come to a seat. I think you will not now be unwilling to talk with me, and we can do it in peace. Come to a seat," urged the caller, now deeply interested and excited, as were both of the prisoners.

Even when the rover shadower started for the seat, and Reuel docilely followed, he kept hold the red gloves, and Moll came after, her gaze also riveted on the hands.

The visitor motioned his companions to be seated, and set the example, himself, whereupon both the others sat down by his side, one on his left and the other on his right, hemming him in.

"Now, friends," pursued Kent, "I think we can talk with satisfaction to all parties—"

"The gloves!" cried Reuel. "Where did you get them?"

"Yes, yes! Whar did you get them gloves?" from the woman.

"One word, first. What do you know of them?"

"Kin you expect me to tell that?"

"I do expect it, Reuel Cragoff, and I'll tell you why. I am willing to be frank and open with you, but you have rejected all my offers since I came here—"

"I didn't see that you wore the gloves," from Reuel.

"Then the gloves mean something to you?"

"Much! — everything!" cried Moll. "Let me look at them!—let me see them closer. The seams Reuel, the seams—the sewing! That will tell all to me—ah! they are not those gloves!"

Moll dropped Richard's hand suddenly. Deep disappointment was on her face, and both she and Reuel suddenly grew surly of look.

"They were fashioned from others," assured Richard. "Come, friends, we are allies by fate, it seems. You have a secret, and I have one. Let us speak out!"

## CHAPTER XIX.

## A TRAGEDY OF THE LOST TRAIN.

Reuel had lost a little of his distrust, it seemed, but Moll suddenly leaped to her feet, and swung her bony arms wildly in air. Her eyes looked off on vacancy, and she appeared nearly to forget her surroundings.

"What do I care for any gloves but one pair?" she demanded. "There may be more than one sun, but I never have seen them. I can see the sun when he is gone to rest in the west, and I well remember the gloves that were red. Know them? Were they not my own work? The boy bought the leather, and brave leather it was—all red and shiny—but who could make them but old Moll? I did the work, stitch by stitch, thread by thread—ay, and I stitched my heart into those gloves—the gloves that were worn by my bonny boy!"

Richard looked on in wonder. Tears were rolling down the old cheeks, and Reuel's face was twitching.

As Moll paused the visitor hastened to speak again.

"Let us be plain, my friends. We are bound together in this case—"

Moll pounced upon the rover with hawk-like keenness.

"My boy!" she cried, shrilly. "Have you seen him?"

"I do not know that I have even seen your son, madam," was answered, sadly.

Moll's hand fell away, and a sigh passed her wrinkled lips.

"Be still!" directed Reuel. "We could expect no more. Sir, who are you, an' whence do you come?"

"My name is Richard Kent, and I am from Central America last."

"Kent, Kent? I have heard that name before. There was a rich man—a man fortunate in money, but unfortunate in all else—and his name was Noel Kent. Yes, that was his name. Let me look at you. He was handsome; you are plain. He was well dressed; you are plainly dressed."

"Let us talk of the man, not the clothes," urged Richard. "What more can you tell me of this Noel Kent?"

"He was your brother!"

"Why do you say that?"

"'Tis in your face. Unlike as you were in many ways, there is a similarity in features. You are his brother. Have you come to revenge him?"

"What is there to revenge?"

"Who knows? Noel Kent and the Lost Train went out of sight like the dew. I have hunted all along the line of the railroad, but no dead man, and no bit of the train could I find. Look ye, the iron of that train was heavy, with its trucks and braces. Could it have evaporated? No!"

"How did it disappear?"

"I know not. 'Tis a mystery I never have been able to solve, and I may die as ignorant as I am now. Yet, the gloves you wear!—what of them?"

"What do they mean to you?"

"Richard Kent, are you an honest man?—would you deal justly with a miserable old man like unto me?"

"I would; I will! I pledge my word that, if you will aid me, you shall have an ally in me who will stand by you faithfully."

Reuel raised his calloused hand to his face and it shook perceptibly. He hesitated as if to command his voice, and then answered:

"My boy—my only child wore gloves like them!"

"Where is he now?"

"Where is the Lost Train?"

"Do you mean—"

"He was engineer on that fated train!"

"Your son, your son?"

"Ay, the engineer—the most responsible position on a train—my son, my son!"

"Yes," shrilly added Moll, "and the lad for whom I made them red gloves. He went to death with them on his hands."

Richard Kent reached forward and clasped the hands of each of his companions. He knew then that there was a bond between him and the wild, rough pair that would make them friends until death! Worldly position and all else would shrink into nothing before the power of a mutual wrong and mutual loss.

Their loved ones had gone together on the Lost Train.

"I didn't know this, I didn't know this!" muttered Kent.

"Nobody did," admitted Reuel. "You see, I was a train-robber and my reputation was bad. My one child—my boy David—had a passion for railroad life, but he was honest as the stars that shine in a clear night. He changed his name to Hugh Lee, and took work as a brakeman on a train. He prospered; he was liked by his employers, and he rose higher. One day he came to me in the secret way we had to observe at all times, an' told me he was promoted to be engineer. When I heard that a sudden change came over me. I reached out an' took his hand, an' says I, 'The first time I see you in yer cab I'll abandon crime forever, and I'll try to see you on your first run!' I did it, too, and I never have broken the laws since. Ay, that was my boy—David Cragoff, but known to all railroad men as Hugh Lee."

"A brave lad, and he went to his death with the red gloves I made for him!" muttered Moll.

"Had those gloves any meaning further than that?" asked Richard.

"No."

"Why I ask is this: I was in Central America when I heard from a wandering miner that my brother had been lost on the doomed train. Of course, I at once said that I was coming here to solve his fate. The miner told me to have a pair of red gloves made, and to wear them day and night, except when I was in bed. He declared that, if they were seen by a certain man, that man would become my friend, and would be a powerful aid."

"Queer!" remarked Reuel.

"Did he mean you?"

"It must be so, I think."

"Then I have gained thus much."

"But why should this man tell you all this, and yet not tell you more?"

"He said there was one victim who went on the train that wore red gloves, but he claimed not to know more. I can see now that he kept back a part."

"Then I must be the man he meant. I can't guess who he was, though."

"Was he not a friend of yours?"

"It's few friends I have, anyhow. More likely he was some fellow who was concerned in gettin' the train out o' human sight, an' sort o' had a weakenin' spell."

The old train-robber straightened up.

"What do you expect to do here? Why have you come all the way from Central America?" he demanded.

"To revenge my brother's death!"

"How?"

"By finding the guilty."

"Don't you know that the keenest men in Colorado and Missouri—detectives, hunters and miners—have searched all along the tracks and failed to find a clew?"

"All the same, I am as fixed in my

purpose as the eternal peaks of the Rockies. I am here to learn Noel Kent's fate, and I will do it or end my life on the hunt. If he sleeps in some lonely gulch, uncovered, and with white bones glistening in the sun, then that place is good enough for me!"

Redglove Richard had grown excited, and his words came forth with bitter emphasis. Old Cragoff leaned forward as he spoke, fixed a burning gaze upon the younger man's face and seemed to drink in his words like the waters of life.

When he had spoken Reuel leaped forward, seized Richard's arm and vehemently exclaimed:

"Go on! Hunt, and there will be one with you who never yet has faltered—who will die hunting, if need be. Go on, and I will be with you at all times. We will triumph or die hunting for our lost ones!"

#### CHAPTER XX.

##### THE COMING NIGHT.

Richard was not sorry to secure such an ally. Reuel might be an ex-train-robber, but he was a man of great firmness, and had the same reasons for investigating the fate of the Lost Train that actuated himself.

"Where shall we search?" he asked, "and who, first, shall we suspect?"

The elder man's eyes lighted up.

"Do you think somebody did harm to those on the train?" he eagerly asked.

"How else could it disappear?"

"I have thought of all this. I have even tried to name the man who might have done it all."

"What man came to your mind?"

"They do say," replied Reuel, slowly, "that Foster Harrington lost as much money as Noel Kent, but—wal, Harrington had money in plenty right after. When a man is ruined, financially, he ain't supposed to branch out heavy for some time. Still, thar may be nothing in this."

"Now you touch the true case, Cragoff. Let us try to get more light. Were you around here when the train was lost?"

"I saw that train leave Sunspot."

"Was Harrington there? Was there anything suspicious?"

Richard was eager, but Reuel remained quiet and serious.

"On that occasion," he returned, "it was said of Harrington that he was a mighty good fellow. His big pile of dust was on its way to Denver, and he was exultant. He treated every man that went on ther train."

"Treated them? To what?"

"I reckon all but one took whisky. My boy—my David—would never touch a drop when he was at the throttle, so Harrington brought him some lemonade. Davy drank it to please the rich man."

"So every man on the train had a drink of something before they started out?"

"Yes—but Davy took only lemonade."

"Reuel, you say you have hunted in person for the Lost Train. Did you look well to the canyons?"

"Every one."

"How about the beds of the rivers?"

"The same. I searched them all."

"Did you find any that were sandy—places where several lusty diggers could make a hole where a train could be buried in the sand?"

"No, no! The river-beds have no sand ter speak of. Most o' the streams have rocky beds. Besides, ef a train had been buried thar, the next freshet would have washed the dirt away an' left it exposed to view."

"Well argued. Then the train must have left the track on a level."

Reuel looked a little puzzled.

"I suppose so," he replied, hesitatingly.

"Did you act on that theory?"

"I looked all along the line in that way, but I saw no scratches on the rocks such as would be made if the train had run off on a ledge."

"I see that you catch my theory, in part. But, Reuel, suppose that a temporary siding had been put in, that night? Suppose that a gang of men under Harrington had been at work ahead of the train; that they had removed a section of straight rails, and substituted a temporary curve which would cause the train to leave the regular rails?"

"All that was considered, and especially by the detectives who come on from Denver. It was their theory from the first that the train had been side-tracked by just the device you have mentioned, an' they worked on that plan."

"Did they find nothing? Did they look so closely to the regular rails that they could say positively that none of them had been removed, and then put back into place after the train had been side-tracked?"

"They claimed ter have made sure of that, an' I hunted on the same plan, too."

Richard was disappointed. He had held his theories, and they had looked hopeful to him. Now, he learned that an old mountaineer—a skillful man whose work had been accentuated by desire to find a lost son—had done just what he had believed promised success.

Reuel had failed. Where now was hope?

"If you want to find the one who stole that train and killed all our loved ones," broke in Moll, fiercely, "look to Foster Harrington! Who else would want to lure them off?—who would profit by it?"

"Well do I remember the day the train went," pursued Moll. "Ah's me! I thought it very kind to give those on the train something to drink, and I watched Doctor Martin Dowe mix it and give it to Hiram Brown to carry to the men—"

"Did Martin Dowe mix the drinks?" interrupted Richard.

"Ay, lad, every one."

"Then the Evil One presided over the mixing. I knew Martin Dowe of old, and a knave he was. Cunning by nature, and skillful in the use of drugs, he could have drugged them scientifically. And so Hiram Brown carried the drinks to the men?"

"Ay, lad."

"I would give much to know where Hiram is," muttered Redglove. "He was the first person I saw when I entered Jericho, and I should have forced him to his knees but for a mischance. Somebody fired a gun and shot Brown, more or less dangerously. I left him to get aid, and when I returned Hiram was gone."

"Where?"

"I wish I knew. Possibly he crawled off by himself and died like a rat in a hole, though I suspect he was taken away by those who shot him. He was seen in conversation with me; he was shot down. What more? It looks as if there was a resolute effort to keep him away from me."

"Young man!" exclaimed Reuel, "if you are making yourself dangerous to anybody in Jericho, beware that your life does not pay the forfeit!"

"I well know that I walk in dangerous places, but I have thus far held my own. Well, Cragoff, are we allies?"

"To the death, lad!"

"You must get out of here."

The old train-robber's eyes lighted up suddenly.

"You and I have the same reasons for bending our backs to the furrow, now. Once I had a brother; you, a son. Shall we rest idle and let them lie in unknown and unavenged graves?"

"Hyer, young man! hyer's my hand. We will be partners, allies, laborers in the field of justice, and fellow-avengers! To the death, lad, to the death!"

Moll laid her own brown, hardened hand upon those of the men.

"To the death!" she exclaimed.

"Good!" commented Richard. "The union is made. From this time on we fight together. First, you must get out of here. But tell me, are you guilty of the deed for which you were imprisoned

here? Had you hand in the wrecking of the train the other night?"

"No. Those who say it tell the blackest lies!"

"Enough!—I believe you. Now, you must get away from here. I will use my influence—"

Reuel broke into an almost inaudible chuckle.

"Lad," he replied, "do you go to the gulch that leads to my hut when the moon tells the hour of twelve, to-night, and a man will meet you there who will give you news of me."

"What man?"

"Reuel Cragoff is his name. Look ye, I am no chicken. I am innocent of this charge. This night Reuel Cragoff goes free—dead or alive!"

#### CHAPTER XXI.

##### MARCHING ON JERICHO.

It was night again. Richard Kent stood alone on an elevated point of land east of the town of Jericho. He had armed himself with a rifle, and revolvers and a knife were in his belt. He hoped he would not have to use them, but he had his own ends to serve, and justice dictated every move he had planned.

If he must fight his way, he knew how to do it.

He could see Jericho jail from where he stood. The low, wide building was like a panther crouched for a spring as he viewed it then, and, as the night and the shadow of coming events shut it in, the structure had a gloomy aspect.

The rover was waiting for Reuel Cragoff to make his escape from the jail, and he waited with every interest aroused.

He was still there when footsteps sounded and Ben Bitters put in an appearance. Richard stepped back a little, but Ben laughed and hastened to his side.

"No you don't!" cried the guide. "You can't shake me."

"You know my work," was the reply; "you had better go home."

"I do know et, Redglove, an' that is why I stay."

"There may be fighting."

"Ef so, count me in!"

"But it is for Reuel Cragoff, the robber."

"Ex-robber, boyee. Say 'ex'—et makes a pile o' difference. Reuel had reformed, ye know. Land, Redglove, you needn't hev tried ter shake me, ter night; I tol' ye I was goin' ter be inter the game."

"Cragoff is a man of evil repute—you are an honest man."

"I ain't ter blame fer that; don't cast no slurs onter my character. Hard luck has made me honest, but I don't want you ter blame me fer it."

"This is no time to joke. How goes it with Reuel, think you?"

"I come past ther jail on my way hyer."

"Ha! Did you? What was the situation?"

"The sentinel paced the rounds of the jail as usual, an' on the top the other guard set in a chair. Two guards! They covered about all ther space, boyee."

"The tunnel that Cragoff and his wife have so laboriously dug under the walls reaches, according to his claim, beyond the beat of the sentinel."

"But Reuel wouldn't let you see et, an' he may have erred. I'm afraid ther old robber won't get out."

"He will be exposed to the rifles of the sentinels, and it seems a mad hope to expect him and Moll to escape, but Reuel would hear to no objections from me. I trust he will escape; I need his aid."

"I ain't over-fastidious, but I like ter choose my own company on holidays. That don't prevent my canterin' around with Reuel by night, ef you want him along. Still, you know he knelt down by ther spook train an' said his sins had found him out—"

"He has explained that. He had blamed himself for the loss of his son, thinking, with a grain of superstition, that the son's disappearance was be-

cause he—the father—had once been a law-breaker. Reuel is a queer character. He uses educated language a part of the time, and, immediately after, breaks into strong dialect. I think it was once in him to be a man of mark, but he failed to seize his chance. He has, instead, been a law-breaker, but traces of ability linger with the old train-robber."

"Ex-robber, boyee; don't forget the 'ex!'" cautioned Ben.

Redglove Richard was deeply concerned with the success of Reuel's attempt to break jail, but Ben took matters more coolly. He lighted his pipe and sat down on a boulder, but he was not one to fall into positive inaction at any time.

Half an hour passed, and then he spoke again.

"Say, Redglove, jest look off ter ther north an' see what ye make o' things," he requested.

"I see nothing."

"Nor I, jest now; nothing but moonlight an' shadders where they cross an' recross. Still, I did see—Ha! Did you see that?"

"What? Speak out, man!"

"Do ye see ther nose o' the ridge that pokes out beyond ther wooded peak?"

"Yes."

"Right thar you will see whar rock an' trees throw mighty dark shadders, but thar is a gap where the moon steals in an' breaks the line o' black."

"I see it."

"Watch that strip o' moonlight!"

"Ha! A man crosses it!"

"He makes three."

"Another crosses—yes, and another!"

"They was only a beginnin', I reckon. Look Redglove, half a dozen go all in one party. You would think an army was out."

"Those fellows may be there on the most simple errands, but the suspicion comes to me that they may be members of the gang that has troubled us so much—the Gold Grubbers."

Ben Bitters scratched his head thoughtfully.

"I dunno, I dunno!" he muttered. "I had a theory of my own, but mebbe it is wild. You know Jake Griffin; he's the feller who demanded that Reuel Cragoff had good usage ther night o' the arrest—"

"I know. Jake represented the miners who spoke for Reuel. What of that?"

"Yender p'nt is near the mine whar Jake works, an' nigh his hut. Et struck me as peculiar, somehow."

"What do you infer?"

"You an' I, an' everybody else has allowed that ther last hadn't been heerd from Jake Griffin's miners—"

"They threatened to burn Jericho unless heed was given to their demands."

"They are ther men ter do it, too. Jake is a hard chap, an' he has associates in ther mines that wouldn't stop at nothin'. All Jericho is open ter suspicion; thar are mighty hard cases hyer, an' they ain't all on Jake's side in ther argument, either. Now, Jake has called in vain fer Reuel Cragoff's liberation. Suppose that they have made up their minds ter keep their threat?"

"And burn Jericho?"

"That's just what was in my mind."

"You present a startling possibility."

"Not because I want ter, but because I see et that way. Have you watched that gap down thar? A full score of men have crossed as we've talked."

"You are right, Ben. There is unusual activity down there, and a considerable party of men are moving. I am glad that we have no proof of your suspicion; no proof that they intend to do such desperate work."

"I might go to see who they be, an', ef they prove ter be Jake's party, tell them Reuel Cragoff thinks he kin get out alone."

"No, no, Ben! Reuel says he will have nothing to do with them, and asserts that Jake made his arrest a pretense to gain private ends. He says Jake has been longing for an excuse to make

trouble, and that, really, he and Jake are enemies. Reuel forbade my speaking to Jake of his case, and declares that he will accept no favor from Griffin or his band."

"That's queer."

"I think there is a secret grudge between the two men. Reuel dislikes Griffin cordially, and—"

"Ha, Redglove, look thar!"

"Where now?"

"Straight up Goat-Track Valley. Notice whar the cliff bends a little. Thar is a path thar, and men are filin' down it, an' then restin' in the valley by the rocks."

"Zounds! Are they the same party we saw first?"

"I ain't no doubt on it, boyee."

"Your suspicion begins to look more likely. Why should all these men gather at this hour unless a big movement is intended? They are not near the railroad track, so we can rest assured they are not the Gold Grubbers. They have marched from the mines where we know Jake Griffin and his men work, and they are within the very valley where lies Jericho."

"An' Jericho sleeps."

"Hardly a light shows in the town."

"Thar may soon be many a light—the light of burnin' buildings. Ther threat o' Jake's gang is that they will apply ther torch an' lay the town in ashes, an' they may be thar to do it."

Richard Kent fingered his rifle nervously.

"What are we to do?" he asked.

"Alarm the town."

"It would ruin my own hopes."

"Why?"

"There would be a rush to the jail, and Reuel Cragoff's work would be discovered. Under the wall on that dark building the old robber wields the shovel to dig away the last of the earth that lies between him and liberty. Once let Jericho be aroused, and men bestir themselves to protect the town, and Reuel's tunnel would avail him nothing."

"By durn! that's so, Redglove!"

"What are we to do?" cried the rover, excitedly. "We can't let Jericho burn tamely, and yet—the liberty of Reuel Cragoff means much, everything to me. Shall I sacrifice myself or Jericho? Ben, can you suggest nothing? This is a desperate dilemma. Speak, man!"

## CHAPTER XXII.

### IN KEEN SUSPENSE.

Ben Bitters shook his head dolefully, but he made no reply. He was a man who had seen much of wild life, and adventure was a common thing with him, but the present dilemma was more than he knew how to manage.

"Where is Reuel Cragoff?" demanded Richard, impatiently, anon. "It is full time for him to be here, yet he comes not, and the force in the valley must be about ready to march against Jericho."

"Reuel may have been hemmed in by the guards so he can't leave."

"Yes, or his tunnel may have been discovered!" exclaimed Richard, bitterly.

"Patience, Redglove, patience! All may come out well."

"There is further motion among the gang by the cliff. Several persons leave it and move toward the houses. They are scouts to see just what the situation is."

"No doubt you are right."

Redglove suddenly cast down his rifle.

"Ben, I will not remain idle in such an emergency. It was Reuel Cragoff's strict injunction that I should keep away from the jail while he was seeking to get out, but he could not foresee this crisis. I must, I will go to his aid."

"I'll back ye up—"

"No! Stay here, Ben, and be ready to give your aid to whoever reaches here, if anybody does. Reuel may come, or I may come, and in sore need. Keep by this place; I will away."

"Wal, wal, Redglove, it's your case. I'll obey."

"Ha! see yonder!"

"What?"

"One of those knaves who are sneaking along the base of the cliff ventured out into the moonlight a trifle. I saw that he carried some short, club-like article on his arm that was not a rifle or revolver. My word for it, 'twas a pine knot, and one of those with which Jericho is to be given up to the flames. They will sneak up like cowardly coyotes and apply the brand while the honest men sleep—ay, and the women and children. Ben, this night may yet be one of horror! The sky may be red with flames, and the streets with blood!"

"Redglove, whar shall you an' I be then?"

"Fighting! Come what will I shall do my part to save Jericho. Deep as my private ends concern the future there is one thing that goes before them all. There are women and children sleeping in Jericho! I am ready to die in their defense, if need be. It is the first duty of the hour, but I do not forget Reuel Cragoff. I go!"

Richard bounded down the slope.

"Stop, stop!—yer rifle, boyee, yer rifle! He don't hear me. He threw et down ter leave et, but I would have taken it. Say, but I like his mettle. Fifty years I've traveled ther wild ranges as boy an' man; an' rough times have I seen. I've seen good men, too, an' I see one when I look on Redglove. He's got blood in his veins, he has. Ha! he reaches the valley! What will he do now? Good, good! He dashes across the open space like a grayhound! He reaches the line of ther town; the houses and darkness shuts him in; he has run the gantlet, an' no sound do I hear that he was seen; he's safe inside the town, ter do his work. Safe? Nobody is that in Jericho. I hope he will not die before the weapons o' the rival parties!"

Ben climbed to the top of a high boulder, lay down, so as to prevent himself from being easily observed by anybody, and then renewed his watch.

He was desperately interested to see what was going on below.

He advanced his long rifle until he commanded the space before him and could fire quickly.

"Hyer I rest!" he muttered, "but, ef thar is need o' shootin', Long Peter will bark his merriest note. Yes, by durn!"

He tapped the rifle affectionately, and lay still at his post.

In the meanwhile, Richard had made the successful entrance to Jericho that Ben had noted. As far as that part of the town was concerned, it might have been a city of the dead. Redglove saw nobody, and the last light had gone out.

Pressing forward he neared the jail.

"All is still. The light has been extinguished here, too, but the moon is enough for my purpose. A sentinel marches around the jail, and another keeps guard on top. Well protected, one would say, but all Jericho should be here. It's a bad night in the town!"

Nearer yet the rover moved to the point of interest.

"Somewhere yonder must be the place where Reuel Cragoff expected to emerge from his tunnel. Ha! the sentinel marches directly along the line of the trench. What if Reuel should dig up, weaken the earth, and cause the sentinel to fall into the tunnel?"

It was a disquieting thought, and one which, it seemed, the old robber could not guard against. Richard instinctively touched his revolvers as he considered the results of such a calamity.

"I can do nothing here," he decided. "I must wait and watch. I have strict orders from Cragoff to let him do his work alone, and he is cunning. I'll lie down here in the shadow of this house and wait."

Acting on the decision the rover took position and tried to be calm. If he did not wholly succeed he had learned the lesson of Indian-like stolidity, outwardly, long years before, and he was as immovable as the earth under him.

Ten minutes passed.

Suddenly Redglove raised his head slightly and his eyes were directed sharply to the right.

A man came skulking along from that direction, and Richard pressed closer into the shadows.

He had looked for no more than a passing danger, but the stranger paused within five feet of the rover. He stood and looked around keenly, and Richard was not slow to discover that he carried one of the club-like affairs before noted. He listened, and peered toward the windows of the house, and then muttered words fell from his lips.

"I shall be ahead o' time, but I can't resist ther temptation. By thunder! I'll give one family a good warmin' up, right away!"

Kneeling, he lighted a match and then applied the flame to a torch. It ignited readily, and the blaze crept up, revealing the brutal face of the fire-fiend. He chuckled loudly.

"The winders won't be fastened, I reckon; I'll open one o' them, throw this torch in, an' ef thar ain't one house on fire hyer right off, then I'm a liar."

He moved forward closer to the house, reached out and put his hand on the window. He did no more. Richard had no intention of permitting the atrocious deed, and he had softly gained his feet.

Now, with a swift, hard blow of his revolver, he knocked the fellow down and fell upon him heavily. He was prepared for a fight, and had planned to prevent any outcry, but there was no danger of any.

The firebug lay still and motionless.

Realizing that he had been stunned, the rover acted with promptness. He first extinguished the torch, and then proceeded to render its bearer helpless. With strips of cloth cut from his own garments the man was bound and gagged.

"So far, good!" Redglove commented. "He will do no immediate damage. I wish I could say as much for the sentinel yonder."

The sentinel was still pacing his beat. He had the air of a person who was attentive to duty because he ought to be, but without expectation of trouble.

He went on around the jail and returned. He was moving off a second time when Richard's strained gaze caught sight of more. A human figure rose in the sentinel's rear, seeming to come out of the very ground.

The sentinel walked on.

The figure stole after him.

There was a quickening of the pursuer's steps; a sudden leap, and the second man landed on the back of the first. The latter was borne to the earth.

Immediately another figure rose from where the first had risen, and Redglove distinguished the bony form of Moll Cragoff. She sprung forward, reached the side of the struggling men and added her form to the group.

"The Cragoffs are clear!" breathed Redglove.

He looked anxiously toward the man on the roof of the jail. The latter was facing away from the scene of the struggle.

"He will surely hear the sounds!" thought the rover.

If he did he ascribed them to some other cause. He kept his place, and the watcher began to breathe freer when he saw the struggle end. Reuel had subdued his man without any outcry.

The old robber was too wise to linger long. Some ready means he must have had for binding the prisoner. It was done with remarkable celerity, and then both Reuel and Moll turned away and left the spot with swift steps.

Their course was toward the rover's ambush, and the latter rose as they neared him.

"Be calm!" he directed. "It is only I, your ally."

Reuel manifested no surprise.

"You are not at your post!" he exclaimed, somewhat sharply.

"This is no night for inactivity. Jer-

icho is in peril. Jake Griffin is to keep his threat, and the torch menaces the town."

"Ha!" cried Reuel, "is that so? Has no alarm been given? Well, well, I will see to that. I'll go and tell the sheriff!"

### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### FIGHTING IN JERICHO.

Redglove Richard looked at his ally in surprise.

"Surely, you would not be so rash!" he exclaimed. "It must be my place to spread the alarm."

"No!" replied Reuel, stolidly. "You do not want to be questioned too much; they would ask how you knew so much. I can do all this easily. Do you and my wife proceed to the hills. I will go to Sheriff West."

"Not a step will I go until you are safe," declared Moll.

"Woman, I bid thee go."

"No!"

"Be not forward in this crisis—"

"We live or die together!" stubbornly asserted Moll.

Reuel looked at her with a sudden softening of his hard visage.

"Faithful thus far in life—faithful to the end!" he muttered. "So be it, wife of my troubled career. Come!—we will go to the sheriff now!"

"And after?" questioned Redglove.

"We go to the hills."

"Do that, you and your wife. My place is here. Even with the warning you intend to give there will be hard fighting. But you, Cragoff—it will not do for you to see the sheriff."

"His house is here. Watch!"

He seized upon a window-sash and shook it forcibly.

"'Tis the signal he selected, himself, as I heard him give it to the sentinels at the jail. It will soon bring him."

Reuel was not wrong. There were sudden sounds within, and then the white robed form of the sheriff appeared at the window.

"What is wrong?" he asked.

" Nahum West, do you know me?" asked the ex-robber, directly.

"No. The light is poor—"

"I am Reuel Cragoff!"

West cried out in alarm, and then fell back. He was not the man to take advantage of an opportunity and recover a prisoner. Instead, it was clear that he was frightened for his personal safety.

"Listen to me!" persisted Cragoff. "This town is in great danger, and it will fall victim to outlaws unless you are up and doing. Jake Griffin and his band are at your doors. They only await the moment when all are at their posts to strike the blow they have threatened. Jericho will go down in the fire and smoke of the rioters' blow. The torch is lighted. Unless you act quickly, Jericho is doomed!"

"The torch! Griffin!" stammered West.

"I tell you the truth. The fire-fiends are here."

"What shall I do?—what shall I do?"

"Arouse! Bestir yourself! Get your men together to repel the attack! Sound the alarm! Fight for Jericho!"

"But it may be too late!"

"Fool! — coward!" cried Redglove, starting forward. "Why do you stand idle now? Away!—get to your post of duty! Arouse the town!"

"I was to ring my big bell if anything was wrong," muttered West.

"Where is the bell?" demanded Reuel.

"Here in my room."

"Give it to me!"

The old robber was so imperious that Nahum was led to obey with strange weakness. He handed out the bell, a big concern intended for a dinner-call, but fit for almost any use, so heavy was it.

"I and my men made arrangements," added West, "that if Reuel Cragoff escaped I was to ring it loudly—"

He was interrupted by the sound of the bell. Wielded by Reuel's muscular arm it sounded its brazen note with full force.

Clang!—clang!—clang!

The signal which was to tell of Reuel Cragoff's escape rang through the town, and, strangely enough, it was sounded by Reuel himself.

It was a situation nobody had anticipated.

High in air swung the old man's arm, and the clangor of the bell was almost deafening. Up, down!—up, down!—the alarm went forth to every house in Jericho.

Clang!—clang!—clang!

"They start!" exclaimed Redglove; "they spring into life; they rush to window and door; they thrust weapons out of the windows. Come, Reuel, your work is done. Away, man, away before they appear and seize you!"

But, instead, Cragoff's voice rose in loud shouts:

"Arouse! This way, this way! Bestir yourself, Jericho, for the foe is at your gates! Awake, or death will follow to all here. The torch of the fire-fiend is laid at your door, and the flames will lap your roof-tree in red unless you drive the invader out. Jake Griffin is here. Ho!—awake!"

Thrice the usual power of human lungs seemed to be Reuel's gift, and his shouts sounded to the remotest part of the town. Redglove had tried in vain to check him; there was no cessation until Cragoff saw fit to pause. Then Richard caught him by the arm.

"Away, man, away!"

"Ay, in good time, in good time!" Reuel responded.

"The whole town is awake! See!—they rush from each door madly; the alarm is complete. Away! If you pause you will be shot down like a wolf. Do you hear their angry yells? Man, are you mad? Away, away!"

"It may be time," serenely answered Reuel. "I have aroused them well, I fancy; I will look to myself."

"It may be too late. If you are recognized nothing can save you!"

"Wrong! I have the weapons I took from the sentinel. These will save me. Come, let us go!"

Richard was beside himself with apprehension and dismay. The failure of the old robber to improve his chances was maddening. It was all the more exasperating because there was a cool unconcern in his manner that told that he was indifferent to the foes around them. It was not the reckless way of inexperience, but the courage of one of long acquaintance with danger.

Nevertheless, Reuel had decided to go, and he did it with skill that put the younger man's efforts to the blush. Men were rushing around in all places, and retreat seemed to be out of the question. After the delay it would have been impossible if headlong flight or a skulking manner had been adopted.

Reuel made neither of these mistakes, but, with Moll by his side, he walked deliberately past foe after foe, as cool as if nothing unusual was occurring.

The rover was dumfounded. The robber had himself rung the bell that was to announce his escape, and now he was walking calmly through his excited foes.

Richard did not allow him to go alone, but where he went his ally followed. Success attended their bold step—the citizens were too much excited to scan faces narrowly—and they approached the outskirts of the town. A hundred yards away rose the cliffs of the eastern slope, with the railroad showing dimly on its skeleton support, the trestle in front of Jericho.

Another man rushed to their side.

"Ben Bitters!" exclaimed Redglove, relieved.

"I couldn't stand et up thar!" cried the guide. "I want ter be whar the rifles sing an' ther bullets fly! Whar is the p'int o' most danger? I want to do my part, an' Long Peter burns in my hands."

Before he could reply there was a burst of shots from back of them.

The first collision had come to the town.

"I want ter be thar!" declared Ben. "Farewell!"

"One moment!" ordered Redglove. "Reuel, will you go to the place of meeting we agreed upon?"

"Yes."

"Go! I will meet you there when I can. Just now there is work for me here—"

There was a fusillade of shots from the centre of the town.

"Come, come!" urged Ben Bitters.

Richard looked cliffward. Reuel was striding off with Moll at his heels, both apparently unconcerned when bullets whistled. Stubborn as they were, the rover felt they were to be trusted.

There was more shooting, and Ben was eager. Redglove did not keep him waiting, and together they ran to the point of hardest fighting.

Later developments proved that Reuel's alarm had been a trifle too soon for the plans of Jake Griffin and his men. For one thing they had aspired to get possession of certain stores and large buildings that would serve their purpose. If they had done so in peace the issue would have been certain, but the bell had clanged too soon.

They were left near these points of vantage, and, when Richard and Ben reached the scene, they found the chief struggle for these points. Small garrisons had been left to guard the places. They were fighting Griffin's men, but more because they could not retreat than from valor.

Quickly Redglove took in the situation.

"Those fellows must be driven off!" he exclaimed.

A half-hearted crowd of citizens were close to him, afraid to go and afraid to stay. To them the rover addressed his remarks.

"Forward!" he shouted, clearly. "We must save the big buildings or Jericho is doomed. If we add our efforts to those of the garrisons we can sweep Griffin's men away. Follow me! Rush on, and make every shot tell. Charge!"

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

##### A WILD NIGHT.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Ben Bitters, "that's business talk. I am with you—lead on! Boys, he wants us ter foller. Will Jericho skulk when there's danger?"

"Jericho will not skulk!" declared Redglove Richard. "There are brave men here, and they will follow me. Come!"

The appeal was needed, for there had been no ready response, but their pride had been touched. Richard led the way, Ben came close after, and they were not alone. Firmly resolved to redeem their reputations, the citizens sprang to the encounter.

The self-appointed leader had selected a certain point for action, and he led the way. Such a bold stand had not before been made, and the rioters were taken by surprise. One moment they seemed sure to win all by beating the dismayed garrison; the next, they were struck by Richard and his men as if by an avalanche.

Straight through their lines surged the assailants, and, as confidence followed the first advantage, the party developed into genuine warriors.

The Griffin contingent was swept back and one building saved.

Some wounds had been received, and hard blows had been exchanged, so, when his men halted, Richard did not refuse to give them breathing time. Elsewhere the struggle seemed to be going against the citizens.

"Where is Nahum West?" demanded one defender.

"Yes, and where is Foster Harrington?"

"Where is Doctor Dowe?"

The names of the leaders were called, but they were not there to respond. In Jericho's hour of need those who, from their public importance, should have

been at the front, were conspicuous only by their absence.

The blood of Richard's followers was stirred up, and, as Ben Bitters used his tongue as well as he had just used his weapons, it was kept warm and active.

Redglove surveyed the scene with a keen gaze. He had seen that his men were not to be despised when they had somebody to show them the way, and he let no unnecessary time go to waste.

"Now, gents," he presently exclaimed, "we want to do more than this. Are we going to let the rioters have possession of the town?"

"Not by a durned sight!" shouted Benjamin.

"These homes of yours are the fruit of honest toil, and the resting places that mean everything to you. I am glad to see among you men of all classes. I am glad that the miners of this town have not gone over to Jake Griffin in full. His gang is made up of foreigners and loafers; the American miners are here, leagued with the side of justice and honor. The true American is never on any other side. Let us drive Jake Griffin's rioters from our streets!"

A shout arose from the gallant band; the address had touched their pride.

"Now let us make another charge. I will lead you—"

"We will follow where you go!" was the shout.

"Good! I am going now. Follow!"

Redglove had selected the point of attack, and he dashed away with Ben Bitters at his heels and the rest of his force close after. The distance to go was not long, and, in a short time, they burst in upon the rioters like a whirlwind. It was no fighting at long range, but hand-to-hand in the full sense of the word, and the struggle was soon raging warmly again.

It was fortunate for the assailing party that they had selected one of the weakest among the important points—they swept Griffin's men back, and they were so encouraged that Richard saw the time had come for further action.

Without giving them any rest, he hurried them on again, and the fight became general. Reinforcements arrived, aroused by the valor of the original party, and there was hot work all through Jericho.

Richard Kent was the leader, and the only one, except Ben. That wanderer of the West did heroic service and set the best of examples, but it was Richard to whom all looked for orders, and they never had found a better leader.

More, it was a struggle with success always crowning their efforts, and the rioters were driven from point to point until they occupied only the extreme western part of the town. This was what was generally called the European quarter, because so many foreign-born miners had lived there, and not one public building was included in the structures that lined the rocky way.

To this region the enemy fell back suddenly and fully.

"On, on!" yelled Ben Bitters. "One more rush an' ther last o' them will be gone!"

"Hurrah, hurrah!" cried the victors. "On!"

"Stop!"

It was the voice of Richard Kent, clear and commanding, and it checked the headlong movement the victors were so eager to make.

"I say go slow now," added the rover. "That section is where the enemy have their own homes, and it would be the easiest thing in the world for them to set a trap for us there, and butcher us in detail if we ran into their snare. We don't care if they do hold that quarter, for they surely will not set fire to their own houses, unless the wind changes."

"It blows due west now, Redglove," added Ben.

"That would take a fire to the mountains; not toward this part of the town."

"But," urged a follower, "can't we drive them out wholly now?"

"Did you notice how queerly they fell back when they got good and ready. Had not word come to the fighters that the trap had been set? Beware how you follow them there!"

"That's logic," admitted Ben.

"What you say, Redglove, we do," declared a citizen. "We like your way, and we thank you for saving Jericho."

"He's been the right man in a bad place."

"Mighty good generalship he's showed."

"But for him Jericho would be in flames now."

"Hurrah for Richard Kent!"

The cheers were given with a will, and a vain man might well have been proud of the standing he had gained in the town, but Redglove looked upon it all with a business eye.

"Gents, I thank you for your good will," was his brief response. "And now, there must be a system for us. Divide into parties and give especial watch to your public buildings, but have men at all points as sentinels. There is special duty for some twenty men."

"What is it?"

"Don't take it for granted that, because you have driven off the foe as a whole, the town is free from them. It is strange if some men have not succeeded in breaking into houses to loot them."

"True as the breath o' Long Peter!" declared Ben Bitters.

"Let ten parties of two men each go through the town and hunt for stray foes. See to it that the women and children are safe, and the houses free from fire-bugs. Ben, I'll take you for a companion. Gents, you can easily hold your position now; there will be no more fighting to-night, except possibly of small parties."

"That's right; we have saved Jericho."

The last words came in a well-known voice, and Foster Harrington pressed forward with Sheriff West by his side.

"We have sa-sa-saved Jericho!" stammered West.

"Fellow-citizens, I thank you," pursued Harrington, grandiloquently. "All my interests are here in this town, and their loss would mean beggary to me. We have fought the good fight, and, though some of us may not recover full use of life and limb right away, we have our reward."

"Friends, I thank you by the wounds I bear!"

Harrington talked just as if he meant it, but he had a cold audience. Nobody there had seen either him or the sheriff when the fighting was going on. Foster's oratory was pitched high, but even this made no impression. When, however, at the end, he bared his arm and showed two red streams trickling down the white flesh, there was a perceptible change.

Perhaps, the generous citizens argued, they wronged the man who had once been their admitted leader—perhaps he had not been idle in Jericho's great emergency, after all.

"I—I thank these wounds, too!" chattered Nahum West, pressing closer to Harrington.

A smile of mingled scorn and amusement fitted across Richard Kent's stern face. Nahum looked as if he had just come from a meat-shop, and had been playing both butcher and ox—at any rate, he had blood enough on him for both. It was smeared on without any system, and so thick as to be ridiculous.

Harrington shot an angry glance at West, annoyed, it would seem, by his bungling over his speech, and then proceeded to take charge of affairs.

Redglove only waited to make sure he was not going to overturn existing plans, and then the rover plucked Ben Bitters by the sleeve.

"Come!" he directed. "There is work for us to do elsewhere. Hark! Ben, was not that the cry of a woman? Follow, and we will help where help is needed. The cry again!—on, Ben, on to the rescue!"

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THE GIANT FOEMAN.

Redglove and Ben hurried away, but the cry that had been heard proved to be that of a woman seeking for her child. She found it just then, and her troubles were over.

"Say!" exclaimed Bitters. "What do you make o' Harrington and West?"

"They have seen no fighting," Richard returned. "The sheriff is a coward. He has been skulking where he was safe, but has come forth now victory is assured. He has bedaubed himself with blood until he is a caricature, and now he seeks to reap his share of glory."

"An' Harrington?"

"What do you say to him?"

"There are two sides in every skirmish, ain't that?"

"Yes."

"Did you see Harrington fightin' on our side?"

"I catch your idea, and I don't dispute the logic of the deduction. It would seem that all of his interests would demand that he array himself with law and order, but I confess that it looks as if he may be a traitor."

"Be you goin' ter let him take command o' ther men you led ter victory?"

"That is for them to decide. I don't aspire to loom up as a leader, and I shall not interfere unless another crisis arrives. If such a time comes, I shall not hesitate to oppose Harrington to his face."

"He's a condemned snake, an' ef he don't look out I'll git up in my dander an' dance on his jugular vein, by durn!" declared Benjamin, with emphasis.

"Do nothing rash, friend. Await the proper hour. Ben, there seems to be a wide space ahead of us with nobody visible, and it's the best quarter of the town. Do you keep the right, and I'll go to the left. If you need help, fire off a revolver."

"Hyer I go. Keep yer eyes wide open, Redglove."

They separated, and each went his way.

Richard passed along with swift steps and eyes strained to catch the slightest sign of trouble. There were somewhat pretentious houses in Jericho, and he was where the best of them lined the street. He had no personal end in his movement, and was so absorbed in public duty that it was a surprise to him when he suddenly found himself in front of Foster Harrington's house.

He stopped short, and his gaze wandered from point to point of the building.

"Dark and still!" he muttered. "It would seem that all is well there, and 'tis the last house in Jericho I would think of prowling about to make sure. I will assume that all is well and go on—Ha! What was that?"

It had seemed that he heard a cry in a woman's voice, and he stood with every sense on the alert.

"Again!" he added. "The cry sounds from the house! Help is needed there. That roof covers my worse foes when they are at home, but duty—"

He bounded forward. At first he thought there was no visible means of entrance, but, when he had turned the corner of the house, he changed his mind. A light showed in a certain room on the lower floor, and the window was open.

Redglove rushed forward; he gained view of the interior of the room, and saw Olivia Harrington struggling in the grasp of a muscular foreigner. She was pale and weak, and her efforts were a mockery of real resistance.

The rover leaped through the window and was in the room.

His movements were so light that the ruffian, absorbed in his work and dragging Olivia onward, did not hear him. He was given no chance to prepare for the fight. Richard went at him with the whole impetus of his body to help the attack, and the man was flung back against the wall with great force.

Redglove followed the attack up, and grappled with his man. The latter was

not subdued. He was like iron, and the shock that would have disposed of a common man only stirred him to fresh action.

The two foemen grappled and began a fierce contest in the narrow limits. Olivia, too much scared to be of the slightest use, knelt where she had been left and watched. There was enough of the womanly instinct left in her to lead her to clasp her hands. It was a prayerful attitude, but if she prayed as she had lived, it was not to the true source of answer to supplication.

Richard Kent was young and strong, but he found he had met a man his superior in strength. Only that he was gifted in scientific ability he must have succumbed. As it was he succeeded in meeting the tremendous efforts of his enemy with tricks that the latter could not duplicate.

It was a mad, a desperate struggle, and they trod up and down the room like gladiators, crushing chairs and other furniture in their movements, but not for a moment did Redglove's courage and resolution relax. He was there with a definite purpose, and he was full of stubborn courage.

Presently he made a welcome discovery. If his huge foe was the stronger, he was not the more enduring. His breath began to come in gasps, and there was a disposition to rest now and then.

He got no rest. Richard was always at him, and he was whirled about like a top. The rover's eyes began to glitter with new light. He knew that victory was certain then. The man was clinging to him as if to hold himself up, and his big limbs were weak.

Richard hurled him back against the wall, seized a fragment of a broken lounge, and delivered a blow. It took effect; the giant fell stunned to the floor.

There was a slumber-robe that had been on the lounge—the victor tore it in halves and bound his prisoner firmly. Then, for the first time, he gave heed to Olivia.

She had not changed her position at all. She still knelt on the floor, her face pallid and strained, and the picture was pitiful. It excited no pity in the rover's heart. He regarded her with a business air and similar thoughts.

"The danger is over," he announced, coolly.

Olivia stretched out her hands nervously.

"You—you are come!" she gasped.

"I surely am here."

"You have saved me!—saved me from this horrible brute! He swore to carry me away to the quarters of the rascals, and that would have been a living death. You—you have saved me!"

"So it seems," coldly returned Richard.

"May heaven bless you!—oh! it is so much you have done!"

"Only a little wrestle with this unconscious brute."

"I was alone in the house. The servants fled at the first alarm, and I was left to myself. I knew not which way to go—I dared not go anywhere. I saw nobody that I knew, but rioters tramped through the streets, and their horrid imprecations filled the air! Blazing torches were waved in their hands, and their light fell upon features distorted with passion! They swore they would burn Jericho, and their looks were stronger than their words. It was horrible, horrible!"

She crouched lower, and wrung her hands in frenzy.

"I was behind the windows, shivering with dread. Each moment I expected them to come here! My blood was turned to ice, and my brain surged like ocean waves in its tenement. Oh! horrors, horrors!"

Redglove adjusted his hat composedly.

Then came yonder brute. All my fears seemed about to be realized. He bore a torch, and swore he would fire the house, but he wanted more. I was to be taken with him, and he was a monster of strength. I was alone with him. I

was threatened with captivity with men I had seen all too plainly, and death might end it all. It was an awful situation!"

"The fellow was a brute, indeed!" muttered the rover.

"You came—you have saved me! Oh! I bless you—I am so thankful for the strong friend found when he was most needed!"

Olivia threw herself at the rover's feet.

"Are you, indeed, thankful?" he asked, quietly.

"Words cannot tell how thankful I am!"

"Will you prove it?"

"Gladly, gladly!"

"Tell me, then, the secret of Noel Kent's death!"

With this request the rover bent a keen gaze upon Olivia's face. She had worked herself up to a high pitch of tragic feeling without any effort on his part, and the time seemed ripe; but no sooner had he made the call for information than she changed swiftly. A new expression flashed over her face.

"Tell me what Foster Harrington did with my unfortunate brother!"

"Nothing, nothing! You wrong Foster when you intimate that he did any harm to him."

"Woman, have you no gratitude?"

"For you, a world of gratitude!"

"Prove it! Speak out! What was Noel Kent's fate?"

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## A VIOLENT ENTRANCE.

The speaker was direct and firm, but he did not receive the attention he would have desired. Olivia regarded him closely enough, it was true, but the gratitude of which she had boasted did not seem to be at the front.

"Richard," she replied, "I wish I could tell you something that would help you—"

"Then tell how Noel died!"

"I do not know."

"Confess that Foster Harrington conspired to have Noel killed, to get the money in the bag that was seen no more."

"If it was so I do not know it. It cannot be so; Foster was not such a man."

"Olivia, have I just saved you?"

"Yes," she admitted.

"Have you no gratitude?"

She was on her feet now. She had grown calm, and all of her old characteristics made themselves visible. She was not the same woman, it might almost be said, that had crouched on the floor like an animal and poured out her gratitude so wildly.

"Richard, I am deeply, profoundly thankful, and I shall be your friend as long as I live. You saved me, you battled for me nobly, and I owe more to you than to any other living person—"

"Pay your debt!" commanded Redglove, sharply.

"How can I?"

"Confess Harrington's crime!"

"He never harmed Noel; indeed he did not. He has been a true friend to Noel, and nobody regretted his death more than Foster did. I know my husband well, and I can assert this to be true—"

"Enough, woman!" interrupted Redglove, roughly. "I will waste no more words with you. I had thought that you might have an element of honor within you, but I now see that you must have been in league with Harrington from the first. You, too, were in the plot to kill him!"

"It is false, infamously false!" cried Olivia, angrily.

"Woman, I am going to bring the whole gang to the gallows, and, when they stand there, you will be one of the party. Justice shall overtake all, and your sex shall not save you from—"

Redglove's vehement speech was interrupted.

A bullet had whizzed past his ears, almost touching the skin. A revolver report followed.

It was a startling change, but, before Richard could discover its meaning, more followed. There was a crash of wood, and then three men came tumbling to the floor, seeming to have emerged from the wall of the room. There was no method in their arrival, or in their subsequent manner, and Redglove stared in amazement as he saw them sprawl in a confused heap.

One of the trio was fairly quick to rise from the tangle. He came up with a jerk, revealing the usually smiling but now surprised countenance of Li Gook.

"Where my blook?" he demanded, at once. "Where life of Glorge Washsatlun, blound in calf, all samee, three dollar a volume, and tlerms in advance?"

Another man unravelled a ponderous form from the rest of the tangle and sat up with a wheezy cough. It was Carl Swick, but not the jolly Carl of old. He, too, looked dumfounded by the adventure.

He gazed all around in wonder.

"Vot vas der matter mit Shorge Washington?" he lugubriously inquired.

"He's all light!" cried Li Gook, suddenly brightening up.

"Not by a tarned sight!" exclaimed Carl. "Der small of my back vas broke avay from der rest of me, und my system vas shattered mit der conguession."

The detective was using his eyes freely. He had discovered that the third of the trio who had entered so unceremoniously was Doctor Martin Dowe, but the latter lay still and, plainly, was stunned by the fall.

Richard turned his gaze upon Carl Swick.

"Why did you enter this way?" he demanded.

"For der same reason dot Vashington crossed der Delaware—he der time had not got to valk around it."

Li Gook had found his precious book, and he now hustled up to Redglove with a profusion of smiles and animation.

"We sellee life of Plesident Washsatlun," he exclaimed. "Him was our ancestor, and we Melicans have reason to be ploud of him welly much all samee. You buy book an' hear all about him."

"Humph, humph!" grunted Carl.

"Tlerms clash in advance before you subscribe," pursued the Celestial. "Carlee, you tell something aboutee Plesident."

"Vot you t'inks I made of, hey?" snapped Mr. Swick, warmly. "You expect me to dell apout der book you have got ven I have to my grave gone down, hey? I dells you I vas alretty halluf dead with der conguession. I vas sore vere I vas sitting, und all myselluf over!"

"Gentlemen," interrupted Richard, "I want an explanation of all this. How came you here?"

"Der blamed vall fell out of itselluf," groaned Carl.

"I can see that there was a sort of window of wood in the wall, near the ceiling—a means of ventilation, when open, perhaps. You came down from that hole in the wall—"

"I vas betting my last halluf tollar that fact on!" declared Carl.

"But how did you get there?"

"We vas a burglar after getting."

"Where is the burglar?"

Mr. Swick kicked the insensible form of Doctor Dowe.

"Dere vas der slimy toad dot der burglar vas."

"Impossible!"

"Eef you t'inks so, shust you my aches dake und feel of dem!" exclaimed Carl, warmly. "I vos von victim to der detective wory I do mit Li Gook as my gompanion."

"Explain fully and quickly!"

"Vell, we vas up here mit our book to sell ven we see der toctor come in here secretly through a vindow. We didn't know him then, und I says to Li Gook, Dot vas von burglar! We vill durn detective und him gotch! Der blan vas voted goot, und so we creep in after him. We follow vere he goes, und it vas into a leetle store-room up there, but der blace vas dark, und ven we

press forward I stumble over him, und der three of us fell into this room fell."

"We catch the burglar, all samee!" chimed in Li Gook, grinning.

"What was yonder man doing in the store-room?" demanded Redglove.

"Listening to der talk."

"What talk?"

"In here mit yourselluf."

"How do you know that, if it was so dark in there?"

"We see him mit his ear der crack at before we go in mit oursellufs, but ven we close der hind door we nothing could see."

A few more questions satisfied Redglove that all this was true. Dowe had entered the house, skulked up into a sort of attic room, and spied upon him and Olivia.

The latter looked very much flurried now, and, when the rover remembered how intimate Dowe was with Foster Harrington, he felt that, though she might have been ignorant of his proximity, she was not disposed to look upon the act with severity.

Too prudent to accuse her of treachery or guilty knowledge, Redglove determined to take another course. He ordered Li Gook to pour water upon the unconscious doctor, and the Celestial obeyed with celerity and generosity, almost drowning Dowe with a whole pailful dashed upon him at once.

The unconsciousness was genuine, but, under such heroic ministrations, Dowe presently showed signs of returning consciousness, and he finally aroused fully.

"Raise him to a sitting position," Richard directed to Li Gook.

Carl Swick was still sitting where he had fallen, and he reached over and jerked the doctor up so violently that Dowe almost lost his head thereby.

"Der fun aind't all von way going, is she?" curtly added Mr. Swick.

The doctor was staring around with blank astonishment, but when his gaze reached Richard's face it stopped and rested there. A troubled expression settled upon his face, and the rover spoke roughly.

"I see that you know me."

"You have attacked me," muttered Dowe.

"Wrong! What of your efforts to spy upon me, though?"

"I was sleeping up there—"

"Melican doctor tellee big lie!" exclaimed Li Gook.

"He's built that way," replied Redglove. "Never mind him."

"I object to such language," remonstrated Dowe. "I stand on my dignity."

It seemed to occur to him that he was sitting down, and he scrambled to his feet. Then his face grew angry and he looked the company over with a scowl.

"I have been most infamously used," he declared. "If I am to be assaulted in the house of my friends—"

"Martin Dowe," interrupted Richard, "let us waste no more words. You know me, and I know you. I wish to speak with you, and you will do well to come to the point. There never was any good will between you and me. There is less now than formerly. I ask you, I demand of you, that you speak frankly to me. You will refuse at your peril!"

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

##### THE DEALER IN DRUGS.

A stir at the door was followed by the entrance of Ben Bitters. The guide looked around inquisitively, and then smiled grimly.

"Been havin' an explosion?" he asked. "The house seems sort o' broken up, an' some o' you folks look sore. What's ther cause? Speak out, somebody! This ain't no mum meeting, is it?"

"Mr. Bitters," replied Richard, "how are things outside?"

"Quiet, Redglove; quiet."

"Good! I will ask you and yonder men"—he motioned to Li Gook and Carl Swick—"to retire briefly while I speak with Doctor Dowe. Be so good as to wait in the next room."

"So we will, Redglove, an' ef you want me, jest yell out. Ef thar is anybody you want licked, whisper it softly an' I'll come in an' do ther job. Come on, Dutchy; come on, Heathen!"

Ben linked his arms into those of Carl and Li and marched them off without allowing them voice in the matter.

"We swap you life of Plesident Washsatlun," eagerly suggested Li, "for lat long gun you carry—"

"Not much, you won't, Heathen!"

"And you learn all aboutee our great ancestor—"

"Vat vas der matter mit Shorge Washington?" demanded Carl Swick, suddenly growing amiable.

"He's all right!"

The book-agents rolled out the chorus and then the door was closed by Ben and they disappeared from view.

Dowe and Olivia were exchanging furtive glances, but, as the doctor became aware that Richard had fixed a stern gaze upon him, he recalled his own regard and tried to meet that of his younger companion with innocence and dignity.

The rover rested a hand upon his revolver and spoke steadily.

"Martin Dowe," he began, "I want news from you."

"Anything in reason that I can tell I shall be glad to—"

"Where is Noel Kent?"

"Bless me, do you expect me to penetrate the secrets of the grave—"

"Where did the Lost Train go?"

"Ask in the next world. Until the last trump sounds there is not likely to be such a thing known here—"

"Why did you decoy Noel to his death?"

"Now, now! Don't say that! 'Tis most unjust—"

"I assert that you, Foster Harrington and yonder woman killed my brother!"

"Mad, mad!" murmured the doctor.

"Two years have passed since that tragedy. They have seemed to be years of success to the plot, but that has been because there was no one here to oppose the conspirators. Now, the avenger is here, and those who oppose him will do so to their cost. Martin Dowe, will you tell the truth, or must your life go out as that of the fool goes?"

The doctor shook his head.

"I pledge you my word that I know nothing of Noel's fate."

"That's the best proof that you do know. Martin Dowe, I know you of old. You were as familiar a figure in my boyhood as that of my brother was to me. I need not dwell upon that. You know how well I was acquainted with you, and what excellent chances I had to discover your real nature. You will not deny that I found you to be a rascal."

"Now, see here, Richard, your are hasty—"

"If I had felt one doubt of the correctness of my judgment in pronouncing Harrington guilty of doing away with Noel Kent, I should have been undeceived when I found you were here. I know not why you came—perhaps Noel was foolish enough to treat you as a friend, or maybe you followed him as a carrion bird follows the wounded animal it seeks to destroy—"

"This is infamous!" exclaimed Olivia.

"Enough that I know you were at Sunspot when the Lost Train left there on its fatal trip. Martin Dowe, what did you put in the drink you gave to those who went on the train?"

The doctor started; his usually placid place betrayed emotion, and it was that of dismay.

"What's that?"

"You poisoned the drink!"

"False, false!" cried Dowe.

"At least you drugged it."

"Never, never!"

"And you only carried out the plot you and Harrington had hatched."

"This is an atrocious wrong to me!"

"I know your skill with drugs. Some physicians are noted for one thing, and some for another. Well do I recall that

you were never so well pleased, in the old days, as when you were poring over some book that would tell you how to make unlawful use of some villainous drug a reputable doctor would want to know nothing about."

"Tis the wild speech of one who knows nothing of medicine, and who vents his spite on his superiors!"

Dowe shrugged his shoulders as he made this comment, but his manner was not in keeping with his philosophical words. Redglove Richard was greatly encouraged; he was positive that he had touched the right note when he spoke of the drug.

"The gallows looms up!" he uttered, deeply.

"Pooh! Nonsense!"

"They tell me that life goes slowly with the rope around one's neck, and horrible pictures haunt the mind of the guilty wretch who gasps, chokes—"

"Silence!" shouted the doctor. "I will not listen!"

He started toward the door. Richard raised the hammer of his revolver.

"Stop!"

Dowe hesitated, wavered, looked back in alarm and stopped.

"This is most unjust!" he remonstrated. "I am a reputable practitioner, and well regarded among the medical fraternity—"

"Do they know you killed Noel Kent?"

Olivia had been standing in silence and inactivity, but her eyes and ears missed nothing. She had not been so amiable, sympathetic and wrought up as when she met Redglove on the mountain, and the latter had explained this to himself by surmising that, having failed to get him to reveal his plans to her, she had no longer reason to assume devotion to lost Noel Kent; but, now, she came into the conversation again with tragic utterance.

"Again, again!" she exclaimed. "Can it be you mean all you say? Is this a plan to harass men you do not like, Richard Kent, or have you really reason to believe Noel was slain by violence? Oh! If that be so I would give my very life to aid in avenging him. Speak, Richard, speak! Give me one atom of proof and I will aid you with all my power—ay, if the dead will not speak the living shall!"

"The living? Who?"

"You accuse this man of medicine. Is he guilty? If so he shall speak. Give me one item of proof. Speak, Richard Kent!—speak, for Noel's sake!"

Her arms went up over her head in the old, tragic way, but she had lost her influence over the rover. He never had believed in her, and the events of the last hour had settled the little doubt he had entertained.

"I leave it to you," he quietly answered. "Compel Dowe to speak."

"How can I? I have not the proof."

"Nor I. If I had it I should not need to seek proof from him."

"But you have some grounds—some evidence—some testimony?"

"So much," impressively responded Richard, "that I shall bring rich treasure to the gallows."

Martin Dowe had been seriously shaken, but he was recovering his powers of mind. A cold, sarcastic smile passed over his thin face.

"You overdo your claim!" he asserted. "Empty talk is not proof, and I know your nature well enough to be aware that you would not descend to charlatan devices if you had substantial grounds for the assertion you have made."

"Understand me, Martin Dowe, I do not claim that I know all I desire to learn. If I did, should I be fool enough to offer you clemency in any way? No, I lack some things, and this is why I say to you: Speak out now, and I will pardon your own transgressions if you will reveal all the secrets of the tragedy of the Lost Train."

"I know nothing of them."

"Enough! I shall press you no further. I say to you both that if you want

to persevere in your stubborn folly you can do so. You offer me no favors now; I shall offer you none when I have you in my power."

Redglove Richard turned to Olivia with an air of one who had nearly finished what he had to say.

"You have to-night made yourself in debt to me, madam. Your life is, I presume, more to you than to anybody else. I will leave you to consider how much you owe me."

He moved toward the door.

Olivia surveyed him with perceptible agitation. Something stirred her deeply. Her gaze studied his stern face anxiously. He stopped long enough to touch with his foot the man who had so nearly brought her to grief.

"Perhaps," he added, slowly, "I should have left you with this person for a companion. I will go now."

"Stop, stop!" cried Olivia, starting forward.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

##### THE FORTIFIED CAMP.

Redglove paused. There was promise in Olivia's movement; there was promise in her expression and tone. For the first time she seemed influenced by better feelings, and hope returned to the rover. He returned her regard with a kindly look, and then awaited her further speech.

At that critical moment there was a stir by the door and Foster Harrington walked in.

Richard saw his chances dwindle away. With Harrington on the scene there was no hope of confession from Olivia. It was a keen disappointment, for she might never again be in such a mood, and the rover felt inclined to throw the leading citizen of Jericho out of the house.

Foster, however, gave nobody else opportunity to set an example. His usual urbanity was lacking, and, in its place, a scowl told that he was in ill humor and did not intend to act otherwise.

"What are you doing here?"

It was a prompt, sharp inquiry, and it was addressed to Redglove. The latter heard it with equanimity.

"Just at present I am not doing anything," he answered.

"Who gave you permission to enter my house?"

"Nobody."

"We will not let your going be of that sort. You have my permission to go."

"Be explicit!"

"I will. You are not wanted here; you can go!"

"That is plain enough."

"It certainly ought to be. I will add something: You are not wanted here, now or later on. You have been in this house before. You have come without invitation, and you've been careful not to come when I was here. This must cease."

"Right to the point, sir. I like your frankness."

"You have rendered yourself obnoxious in more than one way, and I may as well say so. The sooner you find business away from Jericho the better it will be for you!"

"Do you order me out of town?"

"That's what it amounts to. Yes!"

"Foster Harrington, I really have hopes of you," replied Redglove, with cool unconcern. "For once you speak your mind, and, for a whiffler, that is commendable. As for this last call of mine, I have no explanation to make, further than to point to yonder bound brute. If your wife wishes to explain further she can."

"Unnecessary!"

"As for leaving this house, I will go—not because you order it, but because I am quite ready to depart. As to leaving Jericho—I shall go when it suits me, and not before. The town is free to all; I am not to be driven off. Don't try it, Harrington. If you do there may be trouble along Goat-Track Valley, and I think you have all you can attend to now. I go only when it suits me."

"Don't be so sure!"

"Can you convince me to the contrary?"

"You will see."

"I accept the gauntlet you have thrown down. Enough of words! I will leave your house."

Redglove turned and walked to the next room, followed by Foster with some circumspection.

Ben Bitters had been standing by the door. He had heard all of the latest talk, and his mind had been filled with gall and bitterness. He did not like the treatment to which his ally had been subjected. Now, he bowed to Richard's decision, but he wanted to show Foster Harrington how little he cared for his orders.

A fire burned in the stove in the outer room. Benjamin deliberately produced his pipe.

"I will have a smoke," he remarked, calmly.

A crumpled paper lay on the floor. He picked it up, walked to the fire, shaped the paper like a lighter, thrust one end into the flame, and then deliberately lighted his pipe.

Li Gook and Carl Swick had left the house, but the guide was mechanically watched by Harrington and Richard.

Ben gained a strong light, and then slowly extinguished the fire of the paper and thrust the unconsumed part into his pocket. This done, he cast a look of derision upon Harrington and turned away.

"Redglove," he remarked, "the air hyer ain't good; it smells bad o' skunks. Le's go!—come on!"

With this the guide left the house, and Redglove followed with equal deliberation. Nothing more was said to them, and they were soon several rods from the house. Ben waited for his ally to open conversation, but the latter made no reference to the recent adventures. He had led to where they had a good view, and when he spoke it was after a careful glance over the town.

"Ben," he asked, "what do you make of the situation between the rival parties?"

"All seems quiet."

"Do you see any signs of renewed action?"

"Narry sign. Both seem ter have gone inter camp, so ter speak. The law-abidin' people hold all ther ground but a small part whar ther foreign miners live, an' that means a practical victory fer them, thanks ter your leadership. Thar is some activity among Jake Griffin's men, but I reckon et don't mean more fightin' ter-night."

"Your opinion exactly coincides with mine. Ben, do you stay here or go with me?"

"I don't know whar you are goin', but I am with ye, anyhow."

"My way is to the hills where Reuel Cragoff and his wife promised to meet me. I have done what I could for Jericho, but I am not one of her people. Unless there is imperative necessity for further help from me, I shall allow them to manage their own affairs. I go to the hills."

"Shuffle on, Redglove. I go whar you lead!"

"Benjamin, you are a trump. I like your way, and we will still keep together."

"Right, lad, right! I know a full-fledged man when I see him, an' you fill ther bill. Lead on!—I foller!"

They left the houses of Jericho; they crossed Goat-Track Valley; they climbed the lower dip of the range and mingled with the grim rocks that lay like sentinels on the breast of the Rockies.

At the given point they met Reuel and his wife. Both had made their own journey easily, and were now as calm and easy as ever. Richard held some conversation with them, and then all lay down and slept.

By early morning they were astir. Reuel was first up, but he had as companions persons almost as much experi-

enced in mountain ways and as hardened to fatigue as he. All were soon with him. He had food at the rendezvous, and breakfast was duly made.

Immediately after they went to a higher point and looked down on the lower slope and the town.

The sun was just casting its first beams on the vicinity. It touched the enduring points of Nature, and it spread yellow rays on the houses of men.

"Jericho sleeps late," observed Redglove.

"They fought late," replied Ben Bitters.

"I take it there has been peace since we were there."

"No doubt."

"Look to the camp of the rioters!"

"Hallo! they've been busy!"

"Breastworks have been thrown up in front of their position."

"By durn! they mean ter keep up their mischief."

"Plainly so."

"So they've fortified the position they hold. Do they fear the officers of law will raid them, or what's up?"

"It looks to me as if they intend to keep up the fight. They mean to hold the ground they have, and, at the proper time, they will try again to gain more. Jericho is not done with its troubles."

"Redglove, ef they had you ter lead, ther citizens would soon drive them skunks wholly out o' town."

"What they have is Sheriff West—a man proven a coward—and Foster Harrington, a man always missing when a leader is wanted. It seems impossible, but I really believe Harrington is a traitor to his own party. He leaves them in the lurch when they are in need, and it is no thanks to him that Jake Griffin has not sacked the town before this."

"But Harrington had houses hyer."

"That's why I cannot conceive of his turning traitor to his own side, but so it seems to be."

Reuel Cragoff and his wife had been as busy with their eyes as anybody, but they had looked in silence. Richard now turned to the bony head of the family.

"What is your opinion, Reuel?" he added.

"If the panther does not fight for her young she don't want them fought for," sententiously replied Cragoff.

"Admirably expressed!" cried Ben. "Bully fer yer logic, Reuel!"

"One thing more," continued Reuel. "Griffin has pretended to make war on Jericho for my sake. Last night I overheard conversation that explains just why he has risen. He has been stealing gold from the mine where he has been employed. He was detected and punished. All he has done has been from personal revenge. Know him as he is."

#### CHAPTER XXIX.

##### THE HALF-BURNED PAPER.

The truth in regard to Jake Griffin surprised nobody. He was a schemer and a thief, and his hold upon his ignorant followers was making him a central figure. More, he was dangerous until Jericho could rise and throw off its shackles.

Not long did Redglove Richard allow his party to linger where they were. He led them back to their sleeping-ground.

"Reuel," he then pursued, "I want to speak on a subject of great interest to us both—the Lost Train. We want to learn its fate."

Ben Bitters shook his head gloomily, but Cragoff replied quickly:

"We do!"

"That train vanished. Experienced men hunted for it, and in that list you and Ben are to be included. Ben's trade has been trailing, and I suspect your skill is but little less. Nobody has gained any clew to the fate of the train. It disappeared between Sunspot and Horse-foot, leaving no sign. How could a locomotive and several cars do that?"

Reuel and Ben now shook their heads in concert. The riddle was too much for them.

"Clearly," added Richard, "so much wood and iron could not have gone out of sight in a gulch or river, for all these places have been hunted well by skillful trailers. I had a theory, until lately, that a section of rail had been removed by those who stole the train, a temporary siding put in, and the train run off into some obscure place where it has defied the searchers."

"No!" muttered Reuel.

"I agree with you. No! You tell me you thought of that very thing. Of course that scheme could be worked only on a ledge, and you say you hunted along all ledges, at the time, and found no scratch on them that would tell of the temporary siding."

"Right!"

"Only one theory remains; it is new with me. How about an elevated road for the thieves' use?"

"Eh?"

"The railroad all through the mountains runs on land—or rock—that rises and falls constantly. There are sharp grades. The trains have to climb hills and pass through valleys. Is that right?"

"Of course."

"Now comes the theory. Would it be possible to start at the top of a hill and lay a temporary track above the regular one, keeping on a level where the regular track descended into the valley, thus having track above track, and at the proper point, turning the illegal track away from the regular one to some ledge where the train could be cast away?"

"Thunder!"

Ben Bitters muttered the one word blankly, and then the trio sat looking at Redglove with their faces the picture of astonishment. He had advanced an idea new to them, and they were considering it with intense interest.

There was a long pause, and then Moll Cragoff suddenly smote her hard hand on her knee.

"Yes!" she declared. "By my life, yes!"

It was not strictly a womanly exclamation, but it was like the bony woman who followed Reuel's fortunes.

Reuel and Ben joined in with emphasis. They had required time to take such a remarkable suggestion in and digest it, but they had managed it, at last. Ben's face expressed delight, while the Cragoffs seemed to have grown almost handsome with the flood-tide of parental hope that burst upon them.

"That," pursued Redglove, "is what we are to search for now. On some cliff we may find the train lying in plain view, though my theory is that they would not be so rash."

"Probably they buried it," suggested Ben.

"Or selected a spot where they could run train and all into a cave."

"Stranger!" exclaimed Reuel, his usually strong voice shaking a little, "I believe you have found the clew, and we will try it, though we spend a year on this ragged mountain. Every sun and each buffeting rain shall find us at work until the fate of our lost ones is solved!"

"My boy, my boy!" murmured Moll, rocking to and fro. "My bonny boy, who was the engineer and guided the train over hill and vale. He went forth with the red gloves I made for him with my own hands—he bought the leather, sirs, but 'twas my own hands that sewed the seams and shaped them for my David. Oh! My boy, shall I live to look on your grave, and water with tears the soil that rests on the bosom of the bonny boy who was part of my life and all of my love?"

She covered her head with her shawl, and rocked to and fro with a flood of grief that was animal-like in its silent submission.

Ben Bitters furtively wiped his eyes with a ragged sleeve and then jerked out his pipe as violently as if it had offended him sorely and began to cut tobacco with reckless haste.

"Stranger," pursued Reuel, after a pause, "it has remained for you to sug-

gest a theory that was not thought of in Colorado. Do you believe in it, yourself?"

"Fully."

"Then we will make the search—we three—"

He paused and looked at Ben Bitters.

"Four!" exclaimed Benjamin, loudly.

"It is settled, and we will begin," Richard announced. "There is no need of delay, and I will ask you persons who know the mountains hereabouts to recall the lay of the land everywhere you can. If there is any one spot that impresses you as promising, let us go there first."

"There are several places like what your theory calls for," Reuel replied. "We must try—"

"Hullo! What ther dickens—"

Ben Bitters had loaded his pipe. He had next sought for a match, but his wandering fingers had brought out something else from the capacious receptacle. It was the half-burned paper he had crammed into the pocket at Harrington's more out of defiance than because he saw any future use for it. Now, he had spread out the crumpled sheet and looked at its surface. The exclamation had followed.

"What is it, Ben?" demanded Richard.

"Why, this—this— Say, Redglove, look at that!"

He tossed the paper to the younger man. Richard found rough, rambling but easily-deciphered writing there, and he perused it rapidly. His face was a picture as he read—surprise, perplexity and uncertainty mingled with supreme satisfaction.

Suddenly he leaped to his feet.

"This paper!" he cried—"where did you get it?"

"You saw me; it was at Fos Harrington's."

"Whereabouts there?"

"I found et on ther floor. You see me pick et up."

"How came it on the floor?"

"I don't know. I happened ter see et thar just as I picket et up. 'Twas a crumpled sheet that somebody had thrown away as ef 'twas useless, an—"

"Useless! Have you read it?"

"Yes."

"It is the greatest of my discoveries at Jericho! Men, I want your help; I want you to aid me, to hunt with me, to make war with me, to follow my lead through danger and death, if need be!"

Redglove had grown violent, but he had ready response.

"We will!" cried Ben. "Count on us."

"Even so!" added Reuel. "We are allied for work such as strong men may make. Still, I hope this will not take us away from the case that is dear to a mother's and a father's heart."

"It will not. All goes in line, and all points to a solution of our great mystery. Listen to the paper!"

#### CHAPTER XXX.

##### FOLLOWING THE CLUE.

Redglove Richard read aloud as follows:

"I, Hiram Brown, late a citizen of the town of Jericho, Colorado, but now taken away from the public, being of sound mind and perfect memory, but so weak of body that I despair of my life and expect death soon to end my sufferings, do make and publish and declare this to be a true confession of the part I once had in the scheme against the so-called Lost Train, and especially of the concocting of the plot by the parties hereinbefore named; the drugging of the crew and all others on the fated train; the trick by which it was taken forever from the sight of man; the fate of those who went on said train, and the whole evil plot into which I was led by those who gained ascendancy over me."

"This I do because, since I have come into my present strange situation and lost sight of the outer world, I have had time to think, to dread the fate of the

wicked, and to wish to do justice to those who have been injured so awfully by the fate of the Lost Train, and especially Richard—”

The reader paused.

“What more?—what more?” Moll Cragoff demanded, imperiously.

“That is all,” Redglove answered. “The paper ends abruptly.”

“Hiram Brown?” muttered Reuel. “He was lately of Jericho.”

“He was. I knew him well, years ago, when I was a boy. The night I came to Jericho I met him outside this town. I talked with him, but, while we spoke, he was hit by a cowardly shot from ambush and fell apparently dying. I hastened for help, but, when I returned Hiram Brown had disappeared. I then thought he had been taken off by those who shot him, and I still believe it.”

“This may be an old paper—”

“It is not. It begins with a date, and the date is yesterday.”

“Ha! Then Hiram Brown must still be living!”

“He was yesterday.”

“Where was it written?”

“It does not say. He states that he has been taken away from the public view.”

“Ther durned skunks have got him prisoner!” asserted Ben Bitters.

“That must be it. More, he says, he is near to death. Friends, we must find him before life goes out. Hiram Brown can explain all we need to know. He can tell who stole the Lost Train, how it was done, and what became of its crew and passengers. Men, we must find even though—”

“Where shall we look?” demanded Reuel, doubtfully.

“At Foster Harrington’s!”

“Why there?”

“This paper was found there.”

“You think Brown is held a prisoner there?”

“Yes.”

“Depend upon it, you are wrong. If he was there Harrington surely would not let this document lie around his house.”

“Be that as it may, that’s the place where I must look. I will look there. Harrington has threatened to use me severely if I venture on his premises again. He does not frighten me; I shall go as I have said!”

“Ther next time Fos Harrington sees you than he will shoot,” cautioned Ben.

“If he sets the example, so shall I.”

Redglove was firm, and he did not waver in the face of warnings that followed. There was a long talk in which all took part. Even Reuel and Moll had come to see the importance that Hiram Brown was to them. He had been a sort of servant to Harrington, and Reuel now recalled that, when the crew and passengers on the Lost Train had been given something to drink before the start, it was Hiram who bore most of the stuff that Doctor Dowe mixed to the fated men.

If that had not been enough they now had Hiram’s own word for it—and Richard Kent easily recognized a handwriting that had been familiar to him when he was a boy.

Unquestionably, the paper was genuine. Redglove’s first impulse was to go openly to Harrington’s house, and at once, but he yielded to advice and second thought and decided to defer the visit until evening and then proceed secretly.

Once more the possibly location of the suspected false railroad was considered. As Ben and Reuel knew the ground well, they were able to say there were three places near Jericho that would fit the needs of such a scheme.

By two o’clock in the afternoon two of these places had been examined, but without success. No marks were found on the cliff at either point, and careful search all around failed to reveal signs of a cast-away train, or anything that was suspicious.

The third place was not so easy to examine. It was within plain sight of Jer-

icho town, and so high in the air that men could not reconnoitre there by day without constant danger of being seen. It was nearer yet to the scene of the late wreck, where a few guards still remained by the train the Gold Grubbers had brought to grief.

Richard was impatient, but he agreed with the others that action at that point must be deferred.

All went as near as they could and looked the vicinity over. All agreed, too, that it was admirably adapted to the purpose they had in mind. There the regular road struck a descent and fell away with the rapidity of mountain tracks.

If a second set of rails had been temporarily laid above the other, and on a general level, the false structure, by means of a slight siding at one place, could be carried to a ledge which formed the face of a cliff, that, above it, rose three hundred feet precipitously.

Just above where the ledge projected like a shelf there was a confused pile of boulders, none of which was large enough to deny the efforts of a dozen men to move them.

What, if anything, was beyond those high-piled boulders?

The question was not answering then, but they intended to learn something of the vicinity before another morning dawned.

By the time that night settled over the mountain it was decided that, while Redglove went to Jericho, the others should investigate, and that when he returned he should rejoin them there.

At what he believed to be the proper hour he parted from his allies and moved down the mountain alone.

He seemed to be going to a peaceful town, for there had been no visible fighting or hostile developments during the day, but he had no faith in the temporary quiet. Jake Griffin’s men held their position, and this was proof that they intended further mischief.

If the blow did not come that night, it would be because each of the rival parties held the other in awe.

Avoiding the courses where he had reason to believe he might encounter other men, Redglove made a successful trip to the houses of Jericho. Once there he had evidence that there was lax management.

“No guards are set at the rear,” he muttered. “If Griffin sees fit to take advantage of this fact it will be a sorry oversight for the town. Wretched management, this!”

It was not his affair, and he advanced successfully until he reached Foster Harrington’s house.

A light burned in one room, but otherwise all was dark and still. It looked as if some one person was keeping watch alone.

The rover entered the house without trouble. Seeking further he found that Olivia was the one occupant, as far as could be seen.

Bold action was the only course open to him, and he secured a light and began to search the place while Olivia remained in the parlor, apparently unconscious that an intruder was there too.

He hunted through every room in vain; in due time he was prepared to assert that Hiram Brown was not on the premises.

“How, then,” he muttered, “did that mysterious paper get here?”

The rover stood inactive. The wind rustled the window shades near his position. Was it that or more? Richard wheeled about.

Olivia stood before him!

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

##### A DANGEROUS TEST.

Richard Kent was taken by surprise. He had been successful so long that he had come to think he was to end his work with like success and go his way unmolested. In the moment when he least dreamed of such a thing he was conscious of discovery.

Olivia was gazing at him with her face marked by strong emotion, but she spoke not a word. It was left for Redglove to begin.

“You see I am here again.”

The woman aroused with a great start.

“Go, go, go!” she cried, excitedly.

“I am going directly—”

“Now, now! Go at once, or it will be a fatal delay!” cried Olivia.

“Why so?”

“They will come—Foster Harrington and Doctor Dowe—they will come with their lynchers!”

“Oho! Have they something of that sort in mind?” cried Redglove, with his usual coolness.

“They have to-day met and decreed that you are an outlaw from Jericho, and that if you enter here they will lynch you!”

“Pleasant! How many men took part in this tribute to my services to the town?”

“Two or three other men were present.”

“So I am outlawed?”

“Yes, and they will lynch you if they get a chance. Go, go! I am an evil woman, but I am not all lost to conscience. I knew you once; you were too good a man for one like me to know. For the sake of the old acquaintance I wish you well now. Go!—go before the lynchers come!”

“How well do you wish me? Have you enough regard for honor and me to tell the truth about Noel’s fate?”

“No, no!—not that! I do not know; I know nothing about it. I tell you to go—”

“But Noel—”

“Ask me not! Go! We may be interrupted at any moment, and it would ruin me if you were found here again—”

A knock sounded at the door.

“Too late!” gasped Olivia.

“It may be but a trivial call—”

“Tis Martin Dowe! I hear his voice!”

Olivia was greatly excited, but, when the knock was repeated, she aroused anew.

“You must hide!” she added, wildly. “Ruin for both of us will follow if you are seen here. The lynchers will slay you; they will wreck my life. Here!—enter this closet! It has a false back which is known only to me and Foster. If he is not here, you may escape discovery. Look!—see this aperture. It is enough to hide you—”

Rap, rap, rap!

The men at the door were growing impatient.

“Enter, I implore you; enter!”

Olivia was almost frantic, and Redglove could no longer resist her entreaties. If he had to consider himself alone, he would not have gone into hiding under any conditions; he would have faced the lynchers and show them how little he cared for their venom. It was different when Olivia had made her personal plea.

He stepped into the secret recess; she replaced the board. He was left in darkness; she retreated to the main room.

Rap, rap, rap!

He could still hear the summons at the outer door, and he found on investigation that, by moving the secret board a trifle, he could look out and see and listen to all. He heard and saw what followed.

Olivia went to the door and opened it promptly. Doctor Dowe came bursting in with angry face, movements and speech. Several men trod at his heels.

“You are confounded slow!” he exclaimed, warmly.

“I was asleep,” she replied, “and I am alone here. The servants have deserted—”

“I care nothing for them. I seek Richard Kent.”

“Hasn’t he been captured yet?”

“Madam, the question is superfluous! The fellow is here!”

“Here?”

“In this house!”

Dowe was looking keenly at Olivia. Redglove saw this, and he was well

aware that it was a moment of supreme importance to her. If she failed to look out for herself, then she would be unmoved wholly.

She threw up her hands in assumed dismay.

"Here?—here? Save me, doctor, save me! Have you run him so far down? Seize him at once!—he hates me bitterly, and my life will be lost if he gets a chance to vent his hatred upon me. Save me!"

A look of relief came to Redglove's face.

"The same consummate actress of old!" he murmured.

Dowe seemed puzzled.

"Do you mean to say you have not seen him?" he asked, slowly.

"If I had I should not be alive now. I have not seen him. Where is he?"

"We only know he is in the house. He was seen to enter awhile ago, and this visit on our part followed. He has not left, though in what room he is we know not."

"Seize him!" cried the woman. "Search the whole house! Hurry!"

Olivia wrung her hands and appeared to be in deepest fear. She had not lost her ability as a tragic actress.

Dowe stood inactive. Valuable time was going to waste, but he was lost in contemplation of a riddle. He knew something of the past of the woman as it applied to Richard Kent, and he had come there strong in the belief that she had turned from Harrington to her early lover. Now, her acting confused him and made him doubt his judgment.

"Why do you linger?" she demanded, almost hysterically. "The man may shoot me down from ambush. Hasten! Search!"

Martin Dowe aroused.

"Wolf and Parker, stand by the door," he ordered. "The other avenues of escape are all guarded. The rest of us will hunt the house over. Come!"

"Let me keep by you," requested Olivia.

The search was begun; it progressed in detail; it was finally ended when every visible corner had been seen to with scrupulous care. Redglove Richard remained safe within his hiding-place.

The doctor was not a happy-looking man when he halted in the front room after the work was done. He gazed absently at the floor and meditated, and then his thoughts found vent in speech.

"Jones was sure he saw the fellow enter here, but he may have been mistaken, or Kent, hunting to find and injure Harrington, may have gone on as soon as he found Foster was not here. Anyhow, he isn't here now—more's the pity."

"What would you have done with him, doctor?" sweetly asked Olivia.

"Lynched him!" snapped Dowe.

"Why, I thought he fought for Jericho, last night."

"He seemed to. It was a cunning bluff on his part."

"An' one that saved Jericho from bein' in ashes now!" added a big man in a rough costume.

"Eh?—eh?" cried the doctor, angrily.

"What's that?"

"Didn't Kent Redglove fight like a whirlwind ier Jericho?"

"All a sham; all a pretense. Really, he was aiding the rioters every minute. He deceived you, men—"

"Wal, you didn't, doctor!" coolly answered the man. "We didn't see you make no pretense o' fightin' fer Jericho. No, we didn't!"

There was a subdued giggle from others of the party, and Dowe waxed more indignant.

"You will do well not to speak words of sympathy for a man outlawed from Jericho. The leading men of the town—the brains of Jericho—have considered his case—"

"Ther muscle o' ther town may consider it next!"

With this significant reply the rough citizen turned and left the house. Dowe added a few intemperate remarks, but

Redglove smiled with satisfaction. He had been outlawed by his personal foes, but he had received assurance that others in Jericho—the plain people—had only good will for the man who had turned the tide against Jake Griffin when the torch was lighted to wipe out the mining town.

The medical man looked ill at ease, but he mustered up an air of command.

"We'll go now, boys," he announced. "There is nothing for us to do here, and we may be needed elsewhere. The ranks are open, and we may need to fight hotly there ere the sun rises again. We may die in the fight, but that is the lot of the soldier. We will throw strength, skill, and life into the service of this sacred town of the Rockies!"

Doctor Dowe wanted to make a thrilling speech that would start the blood of his followers bounding wildly through their veins. Having finished he waited for applause. None came. His men were silent.

The orator swallowed his disappointment, but not with good grace.

"We will go," he added.

"And I will accompany you," declared Olivia. "I dare not stay here—Richard Kent might return. I dare not stay; I tremble at thought of him. I will go too."

### CHAPTER XXXII.

#### THE STRANGE RIVER.

Doctor Dowe had no objection to make, and Mrs. Harrington accompanied his party from the house. Redglove Richard believed that he understood her object. If she remained Dowe might linger and spy upon the house, but her departure would serve to remove any lingering suspicion that she might see the hunted man there or elsewhere.

All left the house; Richard was left to act as he pleased.

He was done at Jericho for the time, and, as soon as was prudent, he left his covert and the house alike. All was quiet outside, and there was nobody to molest him as he stole away in the darkness.

In due time he gained the higher land—not by the direct route, but by means of a detour that took him up by a safer direction. Once on high land he paused and looked back.

Jake Griffin's men had built a huge bonfire, and the flames mounted high in the sky and cast their light over all the western half of the town. The illumination showed the houses, the streets, the outlying cliffs, and the grim figures of the rioters; and the picture was impressive. The lawless force was never pleasant to look upon, and now they had an aspect that would have alarmed a weak-nerved observer.

"There will be no more fighting to-night," thought Richard. "They would not have built a tell-tale fire had they intended to strike. I feel safe on that score. Well, I am no nearer finding Hiram Brown. I will return to Reuel Cragoff and the rest of my friends."

The moon was shining, and the river perceived that it would compel him to abandon a direct line of progress. To go straight to where he was to meet them would be to enter the strong light, but, by means of another detour, he could pass to the rear of the peak where lay the ledge they were so anxious to examine, and, from there, he could join his associates.

He noticed with pleasure that the ledge was still in shadow, and he imagined that his aids might be investigating it, even then.

He began to move around to the east, and, as he went, he meditated on his latest adventure.

"Olivia is cunning," he thought, not without admiration for her talents. "She handled the affair to-night with consummate skill. Any little trip on her part would have exposed her real feelings to Dowe, but she acted like a mistress of stage-lore. She saved me and

herself, and I know now she is not all bad. A woman of genius! Pity she has not turned her talents to better use!"

Pressing on, Redglove gained the rear of the peak.

"I am a quarter of a mile from the ledge," he murmured. "I must find a gulch, or series of gulches, and wind around to where my allies are, keeping myself concealed. I out of the moonlight. I don't believe it will be so very hard to do. Here is a fine gulch to begin on."

He followed the natural course mentioned for some rods; then it ended abruptly. He ascended one side, and found a small hollow between two little knolls—a space with earth on all sides, but with a few boulders dotting the level, and more on the summit of the knolls.

All this was to his liking, and he was walking on freely when he had a start. The ground trembled under his feet; it seemed to sink. The fact brought apprehension, and he sought to make a dash for higher land, but all his plans were baffled.

Suddenly the earth opened fully, and he fell helplessly into total darkness.

Down, down he descended, grasping wildly for support, but catching only earth that crumbled anew under his touch; while all the while the particles buffeted him as he fell to an unknown fate.

Presently he alighted with a heavy shock. Considerable earth was under him. This began to slip away, and, as there appeared to be hard foundation beneath, he clutched wildly at it and tried to maintain his position.

It was soon over. The dirt slid wholly away, and he found himself resting on a rock which, just then, was firm enough and large enough to hold him well.

Accustomed to danger, Redglove proceeded to learn what his position was. He looked upward; the sky was visible but it was to be seen only through a narrow gap in the earth.

Below, nothing was to be learned by eyesight, but the gurgle of water told that a subterranean stream was flowing with considerable force past his perch.

In brief, he was in a hole in the earth too high to be climbed, especially as no part was within his reach, and as its sides were of dirt that constantly crumbled anew and fell splashing into the water; while his resting-place was a rock about three feet square, with the swift river on all sides.

It looked as if he had met with a trouble he could not overcome.

"I surely can't go up," he muttered, "while as for trusting myself to this subterranean river—well, where the dickens would it take me, anyhow? Perhaps it would dash me against rocks that would crush life out of me, and take me to a narrow spot where I should smother under the mingled pressure of water and earth. A dickens of a fix, by thunder!"

He looked around on all sides and ended with an exclamation of amazement. Something was to be seen that he had not expected.

"What's this? Human beings? A wide stretch of open land with a cover over it all!—a cave of vast size? There are men there—men who carry torches on their caps, and picks and spades in their hands. I see the light falling on their faces, I see the blows of the implements of labor. A mine, as sure as I live. Well, this isn't so bad; there should be some means of escape. I will call to the miners, though they are so far off I am not sure they will hear me. Zounds! I have been in many a mine in my day, but never have I observed one under such peculiar circumstances. I am a Robinson Crusoe of an underground river, and these men look at once weird and pleasant to the eye."

Redglove continued to observe them, and their work went on. They swung picks and spades, and drove the implements into the soil with steady hands.

"Hallo, hallo!"

A young woman had joined the miners. She did not look like a laborer, and her mission was soon manifest. She bore a basket, and from this she took several bottles and passed them around. The miners drank, and then resumed their work.

"That mine must be prosperous, if they toil by night," thought the adventurer on the rock, "but maybe the owners have put on a night-shift to keep their men from joining the rioters. Very likely each man gets double pay. Then it must lighten their labors to have the girl with them. She is a sweet-faced creature, by my life, and I would not object to her company were I one of them. I wonder if they will hear my voice if I hail them? It must be tried, though they are a bit too far off to suit me."

He stood erect, summoned all his lung-power and shouted.

"Hallo!"

There was no sign from the miners; they dug on steadily.

"What ho!—hallo!"

Still rose and fell the spades and picks.

"Hallo, hallo!"

The lights flared and flickered; the men bent their backs; the implements swung as before.

"Ho, there, ho! Are you deaf? Look this way! I am a man in difficulty; I need your aid. Ho, miners, ho! Hallo, hallo!"

Several particles of dirt crumbled from the upper wall of earth, loosened, perhaps, by the vibrations of the shouter's voice, and plunged sullenly into the subterranean river.

"Ho!—hallo! Ya-ho!"

Still swung the picks and spades; still toiled the miners.

"Hallo, hallo!"

There was a mighty rush of earth from above to the subterranean river. It struck against Redglove Richard; it knocked him wholly off from the rock; it left him struggling in the water; he was swept away.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

##### AN EXCHANGE OF SHOTS.

The upper earth had caved in, but Richard Kent was not there to see the ultimate effects. He found the river swift, deep, and strong, and, though he grasped wildly for something to stay his progress, he was carried on in utter darkness like a feather in the grasp of a tornado.

He went on—whither?—to what fate?

The river gurgled and dashed, and there was enough fall to make its progress rapid, but not one rock scratched the rover's person to rend and slay.

Presently, however, a deep roar broke upon his ears, and he knew a fall was near.

"That will end my life!" he thought.

Deeper grew the roar; swifter he flashed along in darkness; nearer drew the final catastrophe; wilder became his efforts to seize some point of rock by which he could hold fast. No rock was there.

Suddenly water ceased under the adventurer; he was shot forward in space.

"Tis the end!" he thought.

He alighted with a shock, rolled over and over helplessly, and then brought up with a final crash.

He was mentally bewildered, though not unconscious for even a minute. He lay on his back in dull inactivity. He was looking for some further calamity, but it gradually dawned upon him that his situation had improved.

"I see the clear sky above, and the twinkling stars, and the white light of the moon on the peaks to the right and left. Here, all is dark, but I see massive cliffs rising above me on either side. I get a breeze, and it is fresh and cool. Upon my word, this is very much like the earth I used to inhabit, and I do believe 'tis the same!"

He sat upright.

"I am in a gulch of the mountains, on the right side of firm earth. I am a bit

sore from my adventure, and still a trifle dazed, but I can see that I am alive and likely to keep on living. Considering what I have been through, this is remarkable."

He scrambled to his feet.

There had been no mistake in his situation, but he was still astonished greatly. He sought for the spot where he had been so violently flung forth into the upper world. He found a narrow cleft in the earth, with a sheet of now-invisible water descending just inside, and falling so far that it sent up a deep roar.

"Instead of going down with that water I was flung clear of it, and shot forward until I fell on dry land. Had I gone into that pit it would have meant death to me. The water runs like a bullet! Nobody could go up where I came down, and I venture to say nobody could again come down and live through it. Strange preservation!"

All things considered, it seemed to be the narrowest escape of his life of adventure, and he remained silent for some time in contemplation of his good fortune. Presently he aroused abruptly.

"Time passes and my allies wait for me! I must not linger here so idly. Which way do I go? Ah! I believe I am on the south side of the peak where I was to meet them. I'll go on."

As his revolvers had clung to their proper places he did not seem to be the worse for the adventure, and he began climbing upward. After a short time he located himself fully, and then, pressing on, came out near the ledge where his allies were to work.

The onward march of the moon had brought the ledge into bright light, and the cliff back of it was a glittering wall of rock, but, as Richard hesitated as to his own course, a friendly voice arose.

"Hallo, Redglove!"

"Ha! is it you, Ben Bitters?"

"Nobody else."

The guide stepped out into view, and Reuel and Moll followed.

"What luck?" the rover continued.

"Wall, I dunno what you would call it. We ain't found no wrecked train, but we have hunted the ledge over."

"With what result?"

"We find that ther ledge runs back some one hundred an' ten feet from its edge, and then ends sharp at ther foot of a cliff full three hundred feet high."

"But we thought there were loose stones there—"

"So thar be. Ther back part o' ther ledge and ther foot o' ther cliff—they are all one, o' course—are made up of a pile o' bowlders, one on another, an' fifty feet high."

"Did you have chance to examine them?"

"Chance enough, but not ther muscle. Ef we had a dozen or more men we could move them bowlders back, but even with your help it ain't possible. They are too big an' heavy."

"Then you can't say whether there is a cave hidden by them?"

"No."

"You are both shrewd men; a guess from you amounts to more than a deposition from some persons. Reuel Cragoff, what do you think?"

"I lay with my face up against the pile of rocks," replied the ex-robber, "and I strained every gift to catch the possible sifting of air through the piled-up rocks. I did not detect a breath of such air."

"From which you infer there is no opening beyond?"

"Just so."

"But the opening may have been filled up by hand!" cried Moll. "My man says so. Why not? If the wreckers could pile up these rocks so high, could they not wall in the space beyond? My man says they could."

"That's it," added Ben Bitters. "Reuel's advice is that you get men enough to tumble them bowlders off from hyer, an' then, if need be, dig beyond. Thar may be some'bin' inter it. Ef thar is any meat in 'theory of a

raised track above ther genuine rails, this ledge would have been a fine place fer the rest of it, jest as we have all agreed before."

"Make that fictitious track," pursued Reuel, "and add a hole beyond which might lead to a cave, and a train could be run into it just as you have reasoned it out, Redglove."

"We'll get ther men!" cried Ben, "an' topple them bowlders off out o' ther way, an' we'll do it ter-morrer night."

"Why wait?" demanded Redglove. "Why not work to-night?"

"Men will not come all the way up here from Jericho when they are needed so sore down thar."

"We need not go to the town. There is work going on in a mine near here; a night force is laboring in such numbers that they could quickly do our work, and I doubt not they would, if properly paid. Reuel, whose mine is near?—over to the east, or north—well, some where that way—"

"Asahel Hooper's mine is nearest—"

"Then let us go there and rally the men. I have seen them at work, and we can soon get them—"

He was interrupted by the sharp crack of a rifle, and a bullet whistled past Richard's head so close as to fan his cheek. The rocks rung with the report, and the air seemed for a moment to be full of miniature shots of the same sort. It created commotion among the allies, and each acted according to past methods.

Reuel and Moll leaped to cover and sheltered themselves behind rocks, but two revolver muzzles promptly rose higher yet, and it was clear that both the Cragoffs were ready to fight with stolid bravery.

Redglove drew his own revolvers and stepped back a little, keeping erect and defiant; but Ben Bitters threw the barrel of his long rifle forward, pulled up the hammer, and was ready to shoot at a moment's warning.

"Steady, steady!" he muttered, deliberately.

"Step back, Ben!" advised Richard.

"No! I've hived ther villain who fired on us, an'—"

Suddenly the guide pressed the trigger. The long rifle flashed, and the peaks thundered with the echo of the shot

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

##### THE TRACK OF THE LANDSLIDE.

"I've done et, by thunder!"

The cry burst exultantly from Ben Bitters' lips, and there seemed to be good reason for it. A yell of pain and terror had followed his pressure of the trigger, and it arose near where the cowardly shot had started that was meant for Richard's life.

"Long Peter never fails!" added the guide, excitedly.

"Whom did you see?" demanded Redglove.

"A man!—I know no more."

"Where?"

"Close ter ther edge o' ther cliff beyond. Don't you know what ther other shot come from? Course ye do, an' that's whar Long Peter chucked his lead. I've hit, too; ther old gun don't miss."

"Look!" exclaimed Reuel Cragoff.

"Ha! the man is visible! He is on the very edge of the cliff; he writhes as if hit hard; he moves aimlessly, too, and trembles on the verge that means so much to him!"

"He will fall; he will go to death!" added Reuel.

Redglove fingered his own weapons nervously.

"I don't like that!" he muttered. "The man is a human being. A fall means death. Ben, I will go with you to rescue him from the fall, or—yes, I'll go alone, so as not to endanger too many of our arty—"

Richard stepped forward a little as he spoke, but Ben Bitters sprang in front of him.

"Not much, you don't!" the guide cried, hotly. "Who is that chap you

would use so tenderly? He's ther one who tried ter shoot one o' us like ther coward he is. He shot from ambush; I shot fair! Go ter pull him back from the precipice, would ye? Not unless you fight me, Redglove Richard!"

Ben was in a towering rage. Richard looked into his eyes unwaveringly. The younger man had as much courage as his elder, and neither wavered, but Richard felt that his course was folly. He did not take the too-merciful step that he had suggested.

Possible trouble was averted by a fresh cry, this time from Reuel.

"Tis Foster Harrington!"

All looked toward the precipice. The wounded wretch had writhed around until the moonlight fell squarely upon his face, and every observer knew him. It was, indeed, the leading citizen of Jericho, turned would-be assassin, and now squirming like a bruised snake upon a precipice where death lurked.

"He will go down!" murmured Moll.

"He gets nearer the awful verge," agreed Richard.

"Nearer what he desarves!" growled Ben Bitters.

"Look, look!" cried Reuel. "A lasso shoots out of the shadows back of the villain! It was meant for him, but it missed. See!—it is drawn in again. Is he deserted? No! The rope flashes out once more!"

"Yes!" excitedly added Redglove, "and this time truly. The noose settles over Harrington's neck! It is drawn tight!—his fall will be prevented!"

"Not ef I know et!"

Ben Bitters was reloading Long Peter with wild haste. He rammed the bullet into the old-fashioned rifle in a vicious manner, but the other party was not idle. Nobody was to be seen, but the wounded man was being drawn steadily backward, and, just as Ben was ready for another shot, the work was accomplished. Benjamin was disgusted. For a moment he seemed tempted to rush out and seek the foe, but better judgment prevailed.

He suddenly broke into a laugh.

"Wal, wal, Redglove, I was a bit hot, I allow, but you know ther way of an old ranger. His was a cowardly shot, an' I did want ter square et up with him."

"I should say you had done your best, and that the debt was fully paid. We are unhurt, and Harrington has a bad, perhaps a mortal wound."

"We'll call et quits. Ef I was harsh ter you, Redglove, jest overlook et."

"I know your way, Ben. There's no ill feeling."

"Let us go!" interrupted Reuel, suddenly. "Are we to stay an' let them pick us off at leisure? No! Let us go!"

It was wise advice, and it was taken. Without exposing themselves to further shots, the allies retreated along the range. They successfully gained a retired place, where they sat down to take their time again.

Reuel was the first to speak, and his utterance was serious.

"When we was interrupted," he remarked, "you had just spoken of a gang o' miners you said were working near—"

"Yes, and you stated they were in Asahel Hooper's mine—"

"Not so, not so!" exclaimed Reuel. "What I said was that Hooper's was the nearest mine to where we then stood, an' whar we now are. Still, his mine is half a mile away; there are no mines on this part of the mountain."

"That's where you mistake, Reuel. There is one to the east of this peak, for I have been in it and seen the men at work."

"There is no mine there!" Cragoff persisted.

"I tell you I saw it."

"It was not my intention to question your veracity. What I meant was that the citizens of Jericho know of no mine there. If you do know of such a thing, tell us all about it."

Reuel was plainly deeply interested, and when Redglove told the story, the old ex-robber was more than interested. His

voice trembled as he suddenly rose and directed:

"Lead the way to that mine!"

"That may be impossible, since I did not enter by the regular entrance, but I surely can locate the hole where I fell in. How much good that will do remains to be seen."

"Lead on!"

Again the party got into motion, and it was done with unusual animation. With Richard leading they hastened off, and, as they walked, they talked earnestly of the latest discoveries and the possibilities of the future.

Although the ground was new to him, the rover found the desired place, but the aperture in the ground had disappeared. The cave-in that had knocked him off from the rock into the subterranean river had been far-reaching, and a landslide in the full sense of the term.

The gap in the earth was closed fully.

After what they knew of the spot the investigators were too prudent to venture upon the surface by night, so they devoted their time to looking for the real entrance to the mine. Nothing of the sort was to be found, and only Redglove's excellent standing saved him from having his word doubted.

When they could do no more they waited for morning.

Daylight showed no opening in the space between the two knolls, but there was every evidence of the recent landslide. The intervening earth was fresh and the general surface more depressed than when Richard had first trodden there, the night before.

Further up the hollow, barren spots marked where the sides of the knolls had slipped away to fill in the cavity.

The allies were bold men, and they continued their investigations. They pressed forward until the earth shook under their feet, and they were forced to the conclusion that, if they advanced further, there would be another slide that would bury them forever from human sight.

Once more, and this time by day, they hunted for the regular entrance. When the most sanguine of their number had given it up they halted near the place of landslide.

"Thar ain't no entrance!" declared Ben Bitters, with emphasis.

"I grant that there is none that is open to the knowledge of the world," replied Redglove.

"Then what will we do?"

"You remember the ledge with the huge bowlders upon it."

"Yes."

"We must get men from Jericho and force these bowlders from the ledge. If they conceal anything we want to know it."

There was no opposition to this, and no argument. Promptly all agreed to the plan, and, while Reuel and Moll sought the best refuge to be found, Richard and Ben prepared to return to Jericho. These preparations meant thorough attention to their weapons, for the town was a dangerous place to Redglove. He had been outlawed, and his enemies had decided to hand him over to Judge Lynch if he reappeared among them.

Reappear among them he was bound to do, and that, too, openly. He did not intend to skulk for Foster Harrington, Martin Dowe or any of their minions, especially when he had reason to believe that the better class of citizens remembered how he had fought for Jericho when the torches of the rioters were lighted.

Richard and Ben started down the range.

They were well advanced toward Goat-Track Valley when they reached the top of a gulch and, looking below, saw an interesting scene.

"Men thar!" exclaimed Bitters. "Ef they are our sort they will fill all needed wants that we have."

"They may be your sort, Benjamin, but they are not mine. I recognize one of them. It is Doctor Dowe."

"Thunder! Do you see who is next ter him?"

"Jake Griffin, as I live!"

"They are hobnobbin' right amiable."

"What does that mean?"

"Ther treachery we have suspected all along."

"Right, and it's treachery we must stop. Ben, here's work for us!"

#### CHAPTER XXXV.

##### SPIES ARE SENT OUT.

The watchers on the upper land were fully alive to the importance of what they beheld. If Doctor Dowe met Jake Griffin secretly and held amiable conversation with him, it could mean but one thing, and that was Dowe was a traitor to those who opposed Griffin in the present troubles.

Presently the men in the gulch showed signs of separating, and Ben Bitters demanded:

"What's ter be done?"

"We must be guided by their own course," Redglove answered. "It is likely they will separate and each go to his own command. If so, there is all the more reason why you and I should appear in the camp of those we have fought with. I do not believe the honest men there have forgotten our service, and I think we shall be well received."

"They separate now."

"Yes. Each goes a different way. I expect to see them do as I have surmised."

It was soon shown that Richard was right. Each of the secret consulters moved toward his own party, but by such routes that nobody who had not seen the meeting would ever have suspected it.

Redglove and Ben conferred somewhat further, and then they went boldly to their destination, entering soon after Dowe arrived there. The latter was not visible, but Richard was surrounded by men who had fought with him the night of the riot, and he was much gratified by their manner.

"I understand," observed Kent, presently, "that I have been outlawed from Jericho."

"We hear that some o' our party have said so," vigorously replied a stalwart miner, "but we don't admit it. No one man, nor two men kin rule this town wholly, nor make its laws an' regulations. We welcome you back, Redglove, an' ef thar is trouble, you kin depend on us ter back ye up. Thar will be no war on you unless them who do et tackle all o' us as wal."

"Right!" was the echo of the crowd.

"Friends, I thank you," answered Richard. "I mean well to Jericho, and I want your good will in every way—"

"You have it, Redglove!"

"Good! I should be sorry to lose that good will, for we have fought together."

"Yes, an' you fought like a hero. But fer you this town would be in ashes now. You suit us, Redglove, an' we'll stand by you."

Again the crowd echoed the speech of their spokesman.

"That is as it should be," Richard declared. "All honest men need to stand together now. Now, where is Foster Harrington?"

"We haven't seen him ter-day."

"What is Martin Dowe doing?"

"Nothing, so far as we kin see."

"Are not those two men your leaders?"

"They were supposed ter be, once, an' they still presume ter speak fer us. We ain't thrown off their claim ter leadership fully, but we begin to feel like doin' of it."

"You have enemies near—men who have rebelled against law and order, and who would have applied the torch to the houses of Jericho. They are encamped boldly in your town. What are you doing about it?"

"Wal, we—hump! We ain't doin' nothin', only Harrington an' Dowe are tellin' what they will do bime-by."

"Why not now?"

"Eh?"

"Why do you stay here idle? You outnumber the foe, and that they feel in awe of you is proven by the fact that they stay in their camp instead of attacking you. You know Jake Griffin. Do you think he is the man to remain idle when he has a fight that he must force upon you soon?—would he remain idle a minute, I ask, if he dared attack you?"

"By durn! Et does look that way, I admit!" muttered the miner.

"Why does he wait?"

"Wal, I dunno."

"I suspect that I see clearly. Has not Jake sent elsewhere for reinforcements for his mob?—for men as evil and desperate as himself?"

A murmur rose from the citizens. They had not thought of this before, and the suggestion gave them a fright. Once let Griffin get reinforcements and he would have Jericho at his mercy.

"What are we to do?" was the cry, presently.

"Attack at once!" exclaimed Redglove. "Sweep the rioters away without delay. Give them no chance to get more men to back them up in their crusade against law and order. Drive the vermin out of Jericho!"

The idea took like wildfire. Instantly a martial spirit came over all. The citizens had been convinced by logic, and now they were ripe for action. There was a cry of approval, and the men grasped their weapons the tighter.

"Show us the way!" was the cry.

"Let me confer with whomsoever you may appoint your leader."

"You are the man!—you, you! Nobody else can fill ther bill. Gents, what do you say? Shall Redglove lead us?"

"Yes, yes," was the general cry.

There was not a word of dissent. As one man expressed it, some folks were born to lead, and that was the way with Richard Kent. It was unanimously voted that he was the right man for the emergency. He did not decline the position. He had no wish to take the leadership from the regular residents of the town, but he knew he must beat out Harrington and Dowe or be crushed by them.

Under such circumstances he was more than willing to lead.

"Now," he pursued. "I approve of an attack at once. If we wait for night they will be on the watch for us, but they won't dream of such a thing by day. If we strike now we are pretty sure to win. We will win! Now, first of all, have you anybody among you who can go to the hostile camp and get a look at the position, without being suspected by Griffin as a spy?"

Silence followed the question; then, one by one, the men admitted that they did not know of any such person.

"I am sorry of that," replied Redglove, slowly.

"Li Gook glow into campee and sell life of Glorge Washsatlun. Him good book to read 'bout our great ancestor. Where would we Melicans be but flor Glorge Washsatlun? Him great man, all samee, and Li Gook go tell rioters so, and sell book, terms cash, bound in a calf."

"Yah, dot vas so. Shorge Washington, he our first Bresident, don't it? Vonce he gommands a sheep on Lake Erie, und he haf a fight der Pritish mit, und der shots fly thick as hail, und Shorge, he say 'Dond't give up der sheep, vor we fight it out dis line on eef it dakes all summer!' Yah, we go to der rioter's camp und sell der book. Vat vas der matter mit Shorge Washington?"

"He's all right!"

Two familiar voices uttered the last words in chorus.

It was an unexpected interruption, and some of the men were not disposed to take it seriously, but Redglove looked sharply at Li Gook and Carl Swick. Peculiar as they were they had brains enough, and, surely, nobody could go into Griffin's camp who would be less likely to be suspected than these same book-agents.

The rover gave closer heed to the pair,

and, the more he talked with them, the more he was inclined to trust them. He had already seen that they had shrewdness under their erratic talk, and that meant a good deal. If they could be accounted faithful, they were valuable recruits.

The result of the consultation was that the plan was acted upon.

Li Gook mounted his burro, and Carl Swick took to his bony steed, and both rode out of town on the side opposite to the rioters. This done they wheeled to the right and advanced toward the enemy's position, and the stratagem was near its trial.

Redglove Richard had pinned his faith on a plan disconcerted by most of his men. He awaited the result with keen anxiety.

#### CHAPTER XXXVI.

##### THE RIGHT MAN IN A HARD PLACE.

By the time that the spies approached the rioters' camp Redglove Richard secretly gained a position where he could watch and listen, and he kept track of their advance with unabated interest.

Carl Swick's horse lagged by the way and Li Gook was in advance when the time of meeting arrived. He approached by the mountain side of the position, where he was sharply observed by the rioters. Jake Griffin was alert, and he advanced to meet the Celestial, while several of his men stood back in a group and watched proceedings.

Jake looked grim and dangerous, but Li Gook did not hesitate. With a smile on his visage he rode boldly on, never pausing even when he saw Griffin produce a revolver.

"In one respect, at least, I have not miscalculated on my men," muttered the detective. "Li Gook has no fear."

The rioter chief met the spy face to face, holding out one hand to forbid further advance, while the revolver covered the grinning Chinaman.

"Stop that!" was the stern command. "What do you want?"

"Li Gook clome visiting," was the serene answer.

"Hold up or you are a dead man!"

"Len I hold up. Want to live welly much until I collect my commissions, all samee."

"You can't pass hyer!" the rioter exclaimed. "Stop, or chew lead!"

"Lead welly indigestible," grinned Li Gook. "Me no wantee chew him sometime."

"What do you want hyer?"

"Want to sell life of Glorge Washsatlun, our great ancestor, and first President of our country. We agents for the book all samee."

"Yah, dot vas right," declared Carl Swick, arriving on the scene. "We der same sells, und a handsome book she vas, too, bound inside a calf, mit green gloth govers, und it vas von octagon boog. Shorge Washington, he vas a great mans, don't it? Vonce he vas in gommard der army of when her Alps did climb, und when der soldiers got footsore mit der long marches, he made hiselluf a banner mit a strange device, mit der word 'Excelsior!' dot banner on; und der beople shouted as he der village through passed, und he climbed der Alps und took his soldiers Valley Forge to, und they der Pritish troops licked so they gried for gevarter, don't it? Dot vas Bresident Washington."

"He was our great ancestor," added Li Gook. "We Melicans ought to likee him welly much; and we sell his life."

"So you want to go to my camp and sell yer book?" asked Jake.

"Yah, dot vas it," agreed Carl.

"Heave ahead! I've seen you two chaps before. Thar is about as much harm in you as a 'skeeter. Jog along!"

The book-agents did not fail to improve the chance, and, as they ambled forward, they were lost to the sight and hearing of Redglove Richard.

The latter returned to his own men with caution, and then all prepared for

the fight that must come. There were still many who had no faith in the spies, and expected them to betray the plot by accident or design. Redglove was not wholly at ease, but he tried to keep up his faith in his agents.

An hour passed; two hours. Then there was more news. Those who were watching saw Li Gook and Carl leave the rival camp by its further side. They rode away followed by laughing comments from the rioters; then they disappeared in the hills.

Half an hour later they rode into the town on the south side, and all were impressed with the skill they used to avoid being seen by Griffin and his men.

"What luck?" asked Redglove eagerly.

"We haf der Bunker Hill fought und daken it!" declared Carl.

"Just like our great ancestor," added Li Gook, with his widest smile. "We have sold many books, too, all samee. It was a welly great victory."

"Shust like der first Bresident," supplemented Mr. Swick.

Redglove pursued his inquiries, and it was not long before the most doubtful critic of the spies was surprised. Both Carl and Li developed descriptive powers that were wholly unexpected, and the position of the rival party, their numbers and weapons were explained in a manner that left the hearers a vivid picture of everything concerned.

A consultation followed in which those now at the front all took part. The old leaders did not appear, and, as the new ones were of one mind, there was no difficulty in coming to a decision.

It was decided to make an immediate attack.

Richard made the preparations with the consent and advice of his most reliable followers, and, with the report of the spies to guide them, they knew just where to attack to best advantage.

Twenty men were dispatched secretly to the hills back of the rioters' position, and then the others moved forward as far as they could under cover of the houses that lay between the rival forces.

Unless there was a serious miscarriage it was to be learned that the enemy had made a mistake in camping within the limits of Jericho.

The period of waiting was one of nervous suspense, but it was over at last. The demonstration came from the hills. The men there permitted themselves to be seen as if by accident, and then, when all attention was fixed upon them, they made a forward dash of a few yards as if they contemplated an attack.

Many of the rioters pressed forward, and then a shot was fired from the hills, followed by three or four others. The rioters took up the challenge, and marks-men began to work freely on both sides.

Another demonstration was made that seemed to look to an advance, and the enemy massed most of their men in front.

It was the chance for which the main body of the forces of law had waited. Redglove Richard saw a fairly clear field ahead of them, and he gave the order to his men.

Out from their various coverts sprung the assaulting party, and then, in an irregular line, they swept toward the enemy's camp.

A considerable advance was made before the charge was detected. When discovery did come it brought dismay to the rioters. They were not in the set of intrenchments where the trouble should have been met, and they had no time to gain them.

Like an avalanche the assailants swarmed toward them.

Jake Griffin was no coward, and his voice rose to rally his men. He realized the danger and sought to avert it, and no man could have tried harder. His followers had been inclined to flee without striking a blow. He rallied them partially, and they presented their faces to the charging party, but it was a weak-hearted contingent.

Redglove allowed the foe to fire the

first shot, but, when it was done, no mercy was shown them. A return volley swept up the valley, and, a moment later, the chargers swooped upon their ranks like a tornado.

It was enough. There was a little hand-to-hand fighting, but it lasted only briefly. One party was full of courage and resolution; the other had been out-generalled and taken by surprise.

The rioters wavered; they broke and fled, nor paused until they were hidden by the hills beyond Goat-Track Valley.

It would never do to allow them easy retreat, so Redglove consented to pursue, and most of the men hastened after them to add to the defeat and the accompanying impression.

Jericho was redeemed and freed from its enemies. Redglove looked around and nowhere saw anybody to oppose him openly or covertly. He remained in the town, and presently sought for Harrington and Dowe. Neither was to be found, though one of the rover's men declared that he had seen the doctor flee with Griffin's followers to the hills.

The Harrington house was deserted. Richard made it a personal matter to search for Olivia, partly to reassure and protect her, but more especially to seek to secure a confession from her.

She was nowhere to be found.

Redglove's enemies seemed to have faded away wholly for the time.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

##### REMARKABLE DISCOVERIES.

It lacked an hour of dark, that evening, when Richard and his pard Ben approached the place where they were to meet Reuel Cragoff and his wife. A reliable man had been left in charge at Jericho, and the rover-shadower had gone to attend to matters of more importance to him.

He had not given up his hold at the town. He had the fullest confidence and regard of nearly all there, and they looked for him to return as soon as possible.

Reuel and Moll were on hand.

"You have fought a good fight," declared the ex-robber. "We have seen it all, and have done something here."

"What?" Redglove demanded.

"The mystery of the so-called phantom train is partially solved. We have found a dark gulch, a mile beyond, where, as we are sure, all the phantom trains have gone. In brief, we believe these trains have been mere dummies, fixed up by somebody, and that they have been run off the track in the gulch mentioned, and there burned. The last one was not wholly consumed. We found it—"

"Are you sure it was not the real Lost Train?"

"Perfectly sure. The dummy had no iron about it. It was a thing of wood, and of such easy construction that a few builders could make it in a short time."

"So the spook train ain't no spook!" muttered Ben, mournfully. "Now, that is what I call a howlin' shame!"

"My theory," explained Redglove, "is that it was a device used by those who stole the Lost Train to work on the superstitious fears of the miners along the range. I can't say I approve of the judgment used in sending out this dummy, but success is proof of all ventures. This succeeded. Is there more of our important subject, Reuel?"

"I am sorry to say there is not."

"My poor boy!" muttered Moll. "My David was engineer of the Lost Train, sirs, and a bonny lad he was. He was sunny of nature, but bold as the lion. My boy, my boy! He went to his fate, sirs, with the red gloves on his hands that I made for him, myself—he bought the leather, but 'twas I that fashioned the red gloves he wore the day he went on that train. Ah! he was the child of my heart, but I'll never again see him!"

"Be not so sure of that!" urged Richard. "I feel that success is near. Reuel, have you been lately to the scene of the landslide?"

"Only an hour ago. There is nothing new."

"I am to have a full score of strong men here soon to help us remove the rocks from the ledge. In the meanwhile, let us take a look at the landslide. The place fascinates me. Come!"

He led the way, and the others followed. They were soon beside the depression where Richard had fallen to the subterranean river.

"Hullo!" cried Ben, "there's been a change!"

"There is a different pitch to the earth in the hollow. There has been another slide of the land. It has not reopened the cavity into which I fell, though a good deal more of dirt has slid down from the sides of the depression."

Reuel and Moll said nothing further than to state that this new shifting of the soil had taken place since they were last there. They plainly regarded it as trivial, but Ben ventured down the side of the ravine a trifle, to make sure as to the situation. Suddenly he raised his head, a peculiar expression on his face.

"Come hyer, come hyer!" he cried. "I'll be dinged ef a hole hasn't been opened in ther 'arth! Say, it looks jest as ef thar was a cave beyond!"

Reuel hastened down the slope with reckless haste, agitation showing in his manner. Moll would have been just as precipitate, but Redglove held her back. All gathered on the spot of interest.

"A cave, a cave!" exclaimed Reuel.

"Go in, go in!" breathlessly commanded Moll.

"We will! The earth here is firm, I think—ay, there seems to be a foundation of rock, a little ways in. We will go. Get torches! Yonder pine grove should supply them."

The explorers moved briskly. They found pine knots admirably suited to their purpose, and these were quickly lighted. One after another they pressed into the new cavity.

At first it was difficult, and, perhaps, dangerous, but the avenue speedily widened until they found themselves in a spacious cave with rock on all quarters except that, now and then, a patch of earth covered the space under foot.

It was an excited party, and they went on in haste, holding out their torches and looking with sharpest vision.

Suddenly Moll, uttering a loud cry, sprang ahead of the others. They looked where she went.

"What's that durned thing?" Ben demanded.

"A locomotive!" exclaimed Richard.

"Ay," added Reuel, "and cars are behind it!"

"The Lost Train!" shouted Ben.

"I believe it is," agreed Redglove, his voice unsteady. "Surely, it is a regular train, locomotive and all, and what other one should be here? Can anybody identify the locomotive?"

Moll Cragoff had been embracing the engine, as if it was a living creature, crying out wildly, and with her bony form shaking. At the last suggestion she leaped from the front to the side of the engine.

"801!" she cried, wildly. "'Tis the very engine that my lost boy used to run!"

She burst into convulsive sobs, while Cragoff's face was working with deep emotion.

"That is right," he added. "Old 801 was the engine that drew the Lost Train on its last journey!"

"Are you sure?" Redglove asked, quickly.

"I'll swear to it. My boy run it every day for six months before he went from out sight; he run it that last fatal day."

"One discovery is made!" asserted the rover-shadower. "More, we find all our theories confirmed. Look back of the train as it stands. Do you see that carefully walled up gap, or what would be a gap if artificial means had not been used to close it?"

"Right, Redglove, right!" agreed Ben Bitters.

"We cannot see through, but it would bnt a dull person who would not see that; the ledge lies just beyond upon which we were to work to-night. The cave we suspected is here, but we have entered it from the opposite side."

At this Richard aroused abruptly.

"What is inside the cars?" he cried.

He bounded to one of the platforms; the others followed; they searched through the whole train. There were pallid faces in that hunt, for they feared to find the bodies of those who had long been missing, but not a body was seen, nor any signs of death.

Redglove was thoroughly aroused.

"Go on!" he ordered. "There is more to be seen here; there must be. Do you recall the men I saw laboring in the mine where you, Reuel, asserted that ne known mine existed?—do you remember the theory I then advanced, and in which you all joined?"

"Forward!" shouted Ben.

A search of the cave was begun, in feverish anxiety, all painfully eager to see what lay beyond.

#### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

##### THEY ARE SEEN AND HEARD.

"This way! Look, look!"

The cry rose from Richard, and his associates hastened to his side. He was kneeling on a rock which made the base of a small opening in the otherwise solid side of the cave. The rover-shadower was looking ahead, and pointing.

"Men!" exclaimed Ben Bitters.

"They work at mining," pursued Reuel.

They are the mysterious toilers I saw when I was on the rock in the subterranean river. This is a different point of view, but I easily recognize them. See!—lights flame from lamps in their caps and torches affixed to the wall of the cave. They wield their spades and picks. 'Tis a gold mine."

"Yonder is a fine-lookin' gal, too," added Ben.

"Who are these men? All agree that no mine is known of here—not one on this side of the peak. Who are these men? Reuel Cragoff, who are they?"

"I know not—I know not! This seems like witchcraft—"

Moll had been the most forward of the lookers. She had stretched her bony figure out on the rock, and, leaning far over, shielded her eyes with her hand and gazed with painful intensity. Now she broke in on the others.

"My life, my life!"

She had turned her head a little. Richard could see here eyes and in them almost the unnatural gleam of insanity. She was deeply moved.

Looking at her companion she huskily whispered:

"My boy!—my brave boy, with his blue eyes and sunny nature, and his brave red gloves that I made with my own hands!—my laddy!"

"Poor soul! She has gone crazy!" muttered Ben.

"Crazy?" she repeated. "Then look for yourself! See the one with the red gloves on his hands! Ah! Now he raises a pail and drinks from it. See you not the one I mean?"

Reuel Cragoff started like a stricken deer.

"My son!" he gasped. "My David!"

Richard pushed Moll aside with a hand none too gentle. He usurped her place and glanced around feverishly.

"Is there nothing for me?" he uttered, thickly.

Ben Bitters shook his grizzled head gloomily.

"Two men an' a woman," he muttered, "an' all as crazy as March hares!"

Suddenly Redglove leaped to his feet. His face was aglow with joy, and he grasped Bitters by the hand and shook it frantically.

"My brother!" he exclaimed. "We have found him!—Noel Kent is there, alive!"

A moment more; then there was a stir below, and the watchers beheld a

familiar form come dashing from a remote corner of the cave.

"Jake Griffin!" exclaimed Richard.

The new-comer was, indeed, the rioter chief. He stood panting for breath for a moment, and then his voice rose loudly.

"Where is Foster Harrington?"

"I am here!"

The response came from one side, and Harrington himself emerged from an alcove leaning upon a staff and plainly a weak and ill man.

"Somethin' must be done!" added Griffin, excitedly. "We are whipped at Jericho, an' Martin Dowe is dead. He joined us in the retreat, but was hit by a stray shot an' killed instantly. Olivia is at my other refuge. She must be made safe, an' she has accepted my offer of protection, but there is no safety here. Men are gatherin' about this cave, an' they will be upon our necks directly."

"What's to be done?" demanded Harrington, nervously.

"Hold the cave. But, first, there is one thing to do. Kill the slaves. They number sixteen, an' we kin command but twelve men. If our slaves rise and aid the outsiders, we are lost. We must dispose of all."

"It shall be done," replied Harrington. "Give the order to shoot them. Get our men to work!"

One of the toiling miners ceased work and strode defiantly toward Harrington. The miner was the one Richard had claimed as Noel Kent.

"We have a word to say here, Foster Harrington!" he cried. "For two years you have held us prisoners in this cave. We have been your slaves; we have worked, guarded by your tools with ready rifles and revolvers. Ay, two years in this miserable hole. Now you say you will kill us.

"I expect no mercy from you; none!"

"But we will resist to the uttermost. Men, this way! Ha! Are you first by my side, David Cragoff?"

"Yes," replied the man addressed. "If I die here, and any live, say to the world that I was engineer of 801, and that I died at my post here!"

"You shall all die!" shouted Harrington. "Jake, call every one of our men here. The rifles are over by yonder cliff where the prisoners cannot get to them—"

The "first citizen of Jericho" stopped short. What he saw dumfounded him.

Redglove Richard, Ben Bitters, Reuel Cragoff and Moll stood in front of the coveted rifles! Each held a weapon bearing upon the desperadoes of Jericho.

The red-gloved rover-shadower raised his hand and shouted in a clear voice.

"This way, Noel Kent! Your brother Richard is here!"

Noel heard; he was dazed for a moment; then he bounded toward his kinsman, his face alight with joy.

"This way, laddy!" cried Moll. "This way, Davy! Come to me, my brave boy with the blue eyes."

The slaves of the mines realized that deliverance had come. With wild cries they dashed toward their rescuers.

Behind Harrington, then, other men surged into view—the wretches who had watched the slaves for Harrington. They came too late. The slaves, now, had the rifles; and, with the memory of two years of captivity and wrong they used them without mercy.

A few moments later, when the victorious slaves hunted the ground over, they found Foster Harrington dead, but the ruffian, Jake Griffin, had escaped.

The men outside the cave who had so frightened Griffin were the helpers Richard had asked to aid in removing the boulders.

When the brothers Kent had ceased to exult over their reunion, and Reuel and Moll had grown weary of embracing their son; when all had grown a little accustomed to the situation, there was a deep, puffing sound at one side, and the cave being now fully open and even Richard's

aids asked within, Carl Swick and Li Gook made their appearance.

"We come to see goodee Melican man, all samee!" announced Li.

"Yah, Retgluff, dot vas drue!" agreed Carl, panting like a hard-run animal. "We half der tale to relate. Some days ago we haf found von wonded man, und we shut him oop, as he ask, in a hole in der rocks avay below. His name vas Hiram Brown. He make von confession of grimes he haf done, und we lose it; but here vas anudder from der same Hiram, don't it?"

"So, you've been hiding Hiram all the while?"

"Yah. Vos not dot right?"

"Carl, to be frank, it was stupid, but this is no hour for fault-finding. We will all forgive so useful friends as you and Li Gook. With Noel Kent and all the others who went on the Lost Train alive we can afford to be indulgent. Friends, this is the last day of toil for the slaves of the mine. The sun has risen for us all!"

Harrington and Dowe sleep in unmarked graves, but of Jake Griffin and Olivia it is only known that, after leaving a friendly letter for Richard in which she said she was going with Jake to share his fortunes far away, the brilliant and evil, but not wholly conscienceless, woman and Jake went from view of those who had once known them.

Olivia was not an ally of Harrington when he disposed of Noel so summarily, but she knew, later on, that there had been foul play. She was then married to Foster, but the news did not shock her enough to cause her to leave him.

Hiram Brown lived, but so shattered in health that he never was punished further.

Li Gook and Carl Swick finished canvassing Jericho and then moved on to other places.

Ben Bitters still wanders through the mountains as of old.

David Cragoff went back to his old position as engineer, and Reuel and Moll regard him with more adoration than ever. Both the elder Cragoffs are now highly respected by those who know them.

Noel Kent recovered all of his lost treasure by process of law. He then settled anew at Sunspot, and has become the most illustrious man of that part of Colorado. More, he has married the young woman seen in the cave—who had chanced to be a passenger on the ill-fated Lost Train. As for the so-called phantom train, it was a very ingenious device of Harrington's to awe the miners of the range so they would keep away from his scenes of crime.

The Gold Grubbers were, of course, those who watched the slaves of the mine.

Redglove Richard's work was done, but he decided to remain in Colorado, and that is now his home. He often sees Noel, Ben, Reuel and the other Cragoffs, and everybody has good words for the rover-shadower, who brought light to dark places around Jericho by his daring and persistence and intelligence as a detective.

THE END.

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